BENGAL
DISTRICT
GAZETTEERS

OFFICIAL AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS.

In India.

Messrs. Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta and Simla.
Messrs. Newman & Co., Calcutta.
Messrs. Higginbotham & Co., Madras.
Messrs. Thacker & Co., Ld., Bombay.
Messrs. A. J. Combridge & Co., Bombay.
The Superintendent, American Baptist Mission Press, Rangoon.
Mrs. Radhabai Atmaram Sagoon, Bombay.
Messrs. R. Cambray & Co., Calcutta.
Rai Sahib M. Gulab Singh & Sons, Proprietors of the Mufid-i-am Press, Lahore, Punjab.
Messrs. Thompson & Co., Madras.
Messrs. S. Murthy & Co., Madras.
Messrs. Gopal Narayen & Co., Bombay.
Messrs. B. Banerjee & Co., 25, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.
Messrs. S. K. Lahiri & Co., Printers and Book-sellers, College Street, Calcutta.
Messrs. V. Kalyanarama Iyer & Co., Book-sellers, &c., Madras.
Messrs. D. B. Taraporevala, Sons & Co., Book-sellers, Bombay.
Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras.
Mr. N. B. Mathur, Superintendent, Nazair Kanum Hind Press, Allahabad.
The Calcutta School Book Society.
Mr. Sunder Pandurang, Bombay.
Messrs. A. M. and J. Ferguson, Ceylon.
Messrs. Temple & Co., Madras.
Messrs. Combridge & Co., Madras.
Messrs. A. Chand & Co., Lahore.
Babu S. C. Talukdar, Proprietor, Students & Co., Cooch Behar.
Messrs. Ramchandra Govind & Son, Book-sellers and Publishers, Kalvadevi, Bombay.

In England.

Messrs. A. Constable & Co., 10, Orange Street, Leicester Square, London, W. C.
Messrs. Grindlay & Co., 54, Parliament Street, London, S. W.
Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 43, Gerrard Street, Soho, London, W.
Mr. B. Quaritch, 11, Grafton Street, New Bond Street, London, W.
Messrs. W. Thacker & Co., 2, Creed Lane, Ludgate Hill, London, E. C.
Messrs. P. S. King & Son, 2 & 4, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, S. W.
Messrs. H. S. King & Co., 65, Cornhill, London, E. C.
Mr. B. H. Blackwell, 50-51, Broad Street, Oxford.
Messrs. Deighton Bell & Co., Trinity Street, Cambridge.
Mr. T. Fisher Unwin, 1, Adelphi Terrace, London, W. C.
Messrs. Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, London, W. C.

On the Continent.

Messrs. R. Friedländer & Sohn, 11, Carlstrasse, Berlin, N. W. 6.
Mr. Otto Harrassowitz, Leipzig.
Mr. Karl Hiersemann, 29, Konigsstrassee, Leipzig.
Mr. Ernest Leroux, Rue Bonaparte, Paris.
Mr. Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague.

BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

HOOGHLY.

[*Price—In India, Rs. 3; in England, 4s. 6d.*]

BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

HOOGHLY.

BY

L. S. S. O'MALLEY,

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE,

AND

MONMOHAN CHAKRAVARTI, M.A., B.L.,

PROVINCIAL CIVIL SERVICE, BENGAL;

FELLOW OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL;

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN, ETC.

CALCUTTA:

THE BENGAL SECRETARIAT BOOK DEPÔT.

1912.

PLAN OF CONTENTS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PEOPLE.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

PAGES.

CHAPTER VI.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

CHAPTER VII.

AGRICULTURE.

CHAPTER VIII.

NATURAL CALAMITIES.

CHAPTER IX.

CANALS, DRAINAGE AND EMBANKMENTS.

CHAPTER X

RENTS, WAGES AND PRICES.

CHAPTER XI.

OCCUPATIONS, INDUSTRIES AND TRADE.

CHAPTER XII.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

CHAPTER XIV.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

CHAPTER XV.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER XVI.

EDUCATION.

CHAPTER XVII.

GAZETTEER.

GAZETTEER

OF THE

HOOGHLY DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

THE district of Hooghly forms part of the Burdwān Division, and lies between 22° 36′ and 23° 14′ north latitude, and between 87° 30′ and 88° 30′ east longitude. It extends over 1,189 square miles, and, at the census of 1911, contained a population of 1,090,097 persons.* In area it is slightly smaller than Gloucestershire, while its population is double that of Surrey.† The district headquarters are at Hooghly, situated on the right bank of the river Hooghly in 22° 55′ north latitude and 88° 24′ east longitude. The name Hooghly is probably derived from the *hoglā* (*Typha elephantina*),‡ a tall reed which grows in abundance on the river banks and in the marshy lowlands below them.

Boundaries.

The district is bounded on the north by the district of Burdwān; on the east by the river Hooghly; on the south by the district of Howrah; and on the west by the districts of Midnapore, Bānkurā and Burdwān. The boundaries on three sides are, except for short distances, artificial, but there is a natural boundary on the east, where the river Hooghly separates the district from the Rānāghāt subdivision of the Nadiā district and the Barrackpore subdivision of the 24-Parganas.

* In 1901 the area of the district was 1,191 square miles, with a population of 1,049,282, but some villages were subsequently transferred to the Burdwan district.

† Statesman's Year Book, 1911.

‡ H. Blochmann, J. A. S. B., 1873, page 217, note.

Configuration.

In shape the district resembles an irregular parallelogram with a triangular projection on the extreme west beyond the Dwārakeswar river. The portion lying between the Hooghly and the Dwārakeswar is a flat alluvial plain intersected by a number of sluggish rivers and streams. The monotony of the dead level is broken by the raised village sites and high river banks; by a sandy ridge, 10 or 12 feet high, east of the Dwārakeswar which runs close to, and was probably thrown up by the Kānā Dwārakeswar; by artificial river embankments, and by a high *jāngāl* or embankment from Tribenī to Mahānād. Between the rivers are a number of saucer-shaped depressions, which, according to their level, form extensive marshes or still more extensive stretches of rice fields. These depressions receive the drainage of the surrounding lands, and in the rains discharge their contents by small channels into the larger streams. Such is the general appearance of this tract, but in reality the country slopes gradually from the north and west towards the south and east; slight as the slope is, it is clearly indicated by the courses of the rivers, streams and drainage channels. Along the bank of the Hooghly from Bagah near Jiret to Ghusurī near Howrah, the fall is from 28½ feet to 20 feet or only 2½ inches per mile; along the Dāmodar from Korah to Paspur it is about 27½ feet or a foot per mile; and along the Dwārakeswar, from Puyā to near Ghosepur, it is about 40 feet or a foot and a half per mile. The rise from east to west may be gathered from the fact that Chāmpādāngā on the Dāmodar is 8 feet and Arāmbāgh 22½ feet higher than Baidyabāti on the Hooghly.

NATURAL DIVISIONS. Uplands.

In the triangular portion west of the Dwārakeswar there is a noticeable change. The slope of the country is more marked; the ground becomes slightly undulating; and the soil is rather rocky, debris of low laterite being found mixed with alluvium. The westernmost corner comprised in the Badanganj outpost is distinctly rocky, being in fact a continuation, at a lower elevation, of the uplands of Bishnupur. In this part of the district the general slope is from north-west to south-east; and the country is drained by a number of small streams, of which the Amodar Khāl and the Tārājuli Khāl are the chief. Swamps and low rice fields become less frequent, while patches of scrub jungle, tenanted by eopards and other wild animals, appear, here and there.

For practical purposes, the district may be regarded as containing two main natural divisions, the plains and the uplands, the river Dwārakeswar forming the dividing line. The uplands are all comprised in thāna Goghāt, which has an area of 146 square miles or less than one-eighth of the district area. Here

there is a perceptible rise in the surface, the drainage of which is carried off by numerous small streams. They all ultimately debouch into the Dwārakeswar, and all have the usual characteristics of hill streams. They have a rapid current rising suddenly and falling as suddenly, they are generally dry after the rains, and they have sandy beds.

Chars. The remainder of the district presents several varieties of deltaic formation. First, the big rivers are busy throwing up *chars* year after year, a process of land formation which is best seen in the Hooghly. Its deep stream is constantly varying its course, now swinging to the left and now to the right, cutting away the bank on one side and rebuilding it on the other, and all the while forming islands or banks on the sides or in the middle of its bed. Successive floods and deposits of silt or sand add to the latter, and thus gradually raise the *chars* permanently above flood-level; or they sweep away the mobile deposits until no trace of the *char* is visible. This work of alluviation and diluviation goes on chiefly at the river bends or at the point of confluence with other streams, where the current is obstructed or becomes sluggish. For example, in the large bend between Guptipārā and Sukhsāgar, or at its confluence with the Kunti at Nayāsarai, numerous *chars* have been thrown up, and the deep mid-stream is frequently changing and incidentally furnishing a fruitful source of litigation.

Lowlands. Further inland, between the Dāmodar and the Dwārakeswar, there is a tract of low-lying land, which, unless protected by embankments, is more or less liable to constant floods, as the boundary rivers, with their connected streams, are gradually raising their beds by annual deposits of silt and sand. In the rains this tract becomes a sheet of water, from which the village sites stand out like small islands. Owing to its liability to submersion, cultivation is precarious. The peasant cannot count with certainty on getting a good crop of winter rice; no upland crops, such as jute, *āus* rice, or vegetables, can be safely grown; and roads cannot be properly kept up. The smaller streams also come down in flood, and frequently change their courses, intertwining with one another in the lower parts of their courses in the most unexpected way. They also add to the general uncertainty of the crops, for if they deposit alluvial silt, excellent *rabi* crops are raised, but if sand, the land becomes sterile. In thānas Arāmbāgh and Khānākul, covering an area of 261 square miles, these conditions add considerably to the difficulties of administration, direct postal communication with Hooghly being often interrupted in the rains. The general effect, however, is

that the land level is being slowly raised, and in time the greater part will probably be raised so high as to be above ordinary floods.

In the tract bounded by the Hooghly and the Dāmodar the rivers are restrained by embankments, and, the level of the country being somewhat higher, the crops are fairly secure against floods. This area can be broadly divided into two sections, the high riparian strips of land along the banks of the rivers and the saucer-shaped depressions between them. The former are more or less occupied by village sites or high lands growing jute, autumn rice or vegetables. The depressions are turned into extensive rice fields, or, if still lower in level, form long marshes. These marshy depressions are especially numerous in the Serampore subdivision, being found between the Hooghly and the Saraswatī (*i.e.* the Dānkuni marsh), between the Saraswatī and the Kausikī, between the Kausikī and Kānā Dāmodar, and between the Kānā Dāmodar and the main channel of the Dāmodar. Another peculiarity is that most of the smaller streams have more or less silted up and have no visible outfall—a fact which accounts for the frequency with which the name *kānā* (one-eyed) is applied to them. Such silting up is particularly noticeable in the Hooghly subdivision above the Kānā Nadī. Numerous small channels drain this tract during the rains, but they are so much silted up, that there is no current after the cessation of the monsoon. The stream is then represented by a succession of stagnant pools in the deeper parts of its bed, while the land, being undrained except by percolation, becomes water-logged. Thānas Polbā, Dhaniākhāli and Panduā, furnish numerous instances of this feature of the river system.

SCENERY. The scenery on the upper reaches of the Hooghly has a quiet, if somewhat monotonous, beauty, its bank being lined with *ghāts*, orchards, white-washed houses and temples, interspersed with clumps of bamboos, palms and other trees. In the lower reaches, however, each bend of the river seems to open up a fresh vista of modern mills, and the impression of commercial and industrial activity which these convey is confirmed by the river-borne traffic of steamers and launches, barges moving slowly along, large boats, of a model centuries old, with flimsy sails outspread, and small skiffs (*pānsis*) going from bank to bank. Above Tribenī the quieter village life predominates—men bathing, women going up and down the bank with water-jars, boats moored alongside or plying on the river. The bank itself is lined with palms, bamboos and mango trees; while the *chars* are covered with splendid crops of vegetables, tobacco or mustard. In the interior, the same scene is reproduced on a smaller scale on all the

larger waterways. Away from the riverside every village is surrounded by groves of mangoes and bamboos, with feathery palms and tall coconuts rising above them. This belt of vegetation is ringed round by fields of jute or autumn rice; and in the lower levels are wide stretches of green winter rice spreading down to the edges of muddy reed-covered marshes. Occasionally during the rainy season, after very heavy rain, the marsh water rises to the level of the villages, sometimes even overflowing into them; and the whole countryside is converted into a sheet of water, communication being kept up by boats or by means of paths over the embankments and the boundaries of the fields.

In the uplands of Goghāt thāna the scenery changes. The land becomes undulating and is less liable to floods. The luxuriant groves and thick undergrowth give place to scrub-jungle and clumps of larger trees; the depressions are fewer, and the fields of winter rice less common; the streams have sandy beds and a rapid course; the villages are fewer and more sparsely populated. As one proceeds further west, the scenery grows more picturesque, and furnishes a contrast to the somewhat monotonous scenery of the plain which occupies the remainder of the district.

RIVER SYSTEM.

The district is mainly the product of its rivers, and is still watered, drained and partially changed by them. Hence for a correct knowledge of its physiography, as well as of its economic and sanitary conditions, a description of the river system is of no little importance. Under this term are included, first, the large rivers, secondly, the smaller streams, and lastly, the village channels. The large rivers are four in number, viz., the Hooghly, forming the eastern boundary, the Dāmodar separating the Serampore subdivision from the Ārāmbāgh thāna, the Dwārakeswar forming the dividing line between the latter, and the Goghāt thāna, and its continuation, the Rūpnārāyan, forming the south-western boundary for many miles. The smaller streams, as a rule, flow from north to south and are either the offshoots or tributaries of the big rivers. They are fairly numerous, and form the main drainage channels of the district. Among them may be mentioned the Behulā, the Kānā Nadī, the Kunti Nadī (also called the Magrā Khāl or Kānā Nadī), the Saraswatī, the Kausikī, the Kantul with the Gopālnagar, the Khiā with the Julkā, the Kānā Dāmodār, the Madāriā, the Besiā or Sānkibhāngā, the Mundeswarī, the Kānā Dwārakeswar, the Sānkrā, the Jhumjhumi, the Amodar and the Tārājuli. Lastly, there are the village channels draining the village low lands, which in the rains usually join the larger streams or discharge their waters into one or other of them, but are often so silted up as to have no visible outfall. After

the rains their water is lost mainly by percolation, all that is left being stagnant pools in the deeper portions of the river beds.

The western bank of the Hooghly is high and, where not occupied by houses, is covered by thick vegetation, except where *chars* have been thrown up. The Dāmodār is embanked all along its eastern bank and is low-lying on the opposite side. The Dwārakeswar is bounded on the west by the uplands and southwards from Bālī Dīwānganj by embankments, with the result that floods are confined to the river bed and the low-lying Arāmbāgh and Khānākul thānas. In the western part of the Hooghly and Serampore subdivisions the narrow silted-up channels are unable to carry off with sufficient rapidity the volume of water which pours into them in times of heavy rain. They consequently overflow, causing considerable damage to the crops in thānās Kristanagar and Chanditalā in the Serampore subdivision, and lower down in thāna Jagatballabhpur and the eastern part of thānā Amta in the Howrah district.

Hooghly. The Hooghly river, or, as it should be more correctly described, the Bhāgīrathī branch of the Ganges, has three distinct sections, the upper section from the point of bifurcation to its confluence with the Jalangī at Nadiā, the central section from Nadiā to its confluence with the Rūpnārāyan at Hooghly Point, and the lower section from Hooghly Point to the sea. The central section is a little more than 120 miles long, of which 50 miles lie along the eastern boundary of Hooghly district. The river first touches the district opposite Sāntipur, below which it turns to the south-east past Guptipārā, Balāgarh, Jiret and Sukhsāgar (in the Nadiā district), forming several large *chars* as it swings from one side to the other. From Sukhsāgar it runs south-west to Tribenī and then nearly south up to Hooghly town and Chinsura, after which it follows a southerly course, winding alternately from west to east, until Māhesh is touched. The river then flows nearly south up to the outfall of the Bally Khāl, which is part of the southern boundary of Hooghly. The channel narrows from south to north, being in the winter months about three-quarters of a mile wide opposite Uttarpārā, half that width at Hooghly and Bānsberiā, and a little less than half of it at Guptipārā. In the rains, when the *chars* and islands are submerged, it becomes more than a mile wide and as much as a mile and half at Uttarpārā. In the summer the river shrinks much in breadth, and the height of water falls considerably. It is navigable by large boats and river steamers throughout the year; but in the hot weather navigation is precarious for river steamers in the northern reaches, as the depth of water falls

to 6 feet, and the channel, winding rapidly from east to west through the *chars* and islands, is very tortuous.

The mean level of the water is affected not only by floods, but also by tides and bores. During the freshet months, *i.e.*, July to September, such a volume of water is brought down that no tide is felt, and the current is known as *ek-tānā* or one-sided. In the dry season the upward tidal stream and the tidal rise and fall are felt distinctly throughout this portion of its course. The high water of the spring tides comes up to Chinsura between three and four in the afternoon. Its velocity, which at Calcutta is 18 miles an hour, diminishes as it advances northwards. The difference between low and high water is 7 to 8 feet at Chinsura, the difference between neap and spring tides being 3 to 4 feet. Further up, the rise becomes smaller and smaller. Bores occur in the hot months (March to May) at perigee springs, with more or less violence, according as tidal conditions are favourable or not and the southerly breezes are strong or feeble. The bore diminishes in force in its passage up from Calcutta, and at its highest may be 2 feet high at Chinsura.

The banks are generally sloping and closely cultivated. Sandy *chars* have been formed on both sides of the river, *e.g.*, at Guptipārā, Balāgarh, Jiret, Bandel, Bhadreswar, Baidyabāti and Māhesh. These *chars* are generally uncultivated, being covered with grass, and often impede navigation in the hot weather months. There are also several islands in the bed of the river above Bānsberiā, *e.g.*, at Tribenī, Nayāsarai, between Jiret and Balāgarh, and opposite Chāgdā and Guptipārā. Fine *rabi* crops are grown on them, and vegetables, especially *patols* and water melons, are cultivated for export to the Calcutta market. Some of these islands must have been formed long ago to judge from the old trees and villages on them.

The following streams join the river Hooghly from the west, viz., (1) the Behulā, (2) Kānā Nadī, (3) Kunti Nadī or Magrā Khāl, (4) Baidyabāti Khāl, (5) Serampore Khāl, and (6) Bally Khāl. The Saraswatī branches off from it below Trībenī and rejoins it lower down at Sānkrāil in the Howrah district. These are now small streams and add little to the body of water in the Hooghly.

Dāmodar. The next large river is the Dāmodar, which in some respects is even more important than the Hooghly. It enters the district from the north between the villages of Shāhpur and Habibpur, and flows south, winding alternately from west to east and separating the Arāmbāgh subdivision from the rest of the district. From above Rājbalhāt it forms the boundary between this district

and Howrah, and then passes southward through the latter district. Including 8 miles along the boundary, the total length of the river in Hooghly is about 28 miles.

In the upper portion of its course the Dāmodar has a rapid flow and brings down vast quantities of silt from the Chotā Nāgpur plateau. It leaves the Hazāribāgh district at a height of only 582 feet above sea-level, and it has a length of over 250 miles from this point till its confluence with the Hooghly. In its lower reaches, therefore, it assumes a deltaic character, throwing off distributaries instead of receiving affluents. Formerly its flood volume, passing along these branches, as well as down its main channel, overspread a large part of Hooghly and Howrah; but most of them have now more or less silted up, while the Dāmodar itself is restrained on the east side by a high embankment. The result is that its ravages have in recent years been confined to a limited tract on the west, but their effects in this tract have been intensified. After very heavy rainfall, moreover, it often threatens to overtop or breach the embankment, and causes no little anxiety. Not only is it justly dreaded for its destructive floods, but it is also notorious for the frequency with which it changes its course. The changes will be described later in this chapter.

The bed of the Dāmodar is sandy and averages half-a-mile in width. It is fordable at many places in the hot and cold seasons, and is then not navigable by boats. In the rains it is nowhere fordable, and a few country boats go down stream with cargoes of rice. Since the formation of a breach in the western bank at Beguā in the Burdwān district, a large quantity of its water has been diverted to the Mundeswarī through a new *khāl* known as the Besiā Khāl, so that the main channel has shrunk perceptibly in size and volume. In this portion of its course the river is too far off from the sea to be affected by tides or bores. No islands have been formed in its bed; but several sandy grass-covered *chars* have been thrown up on either bank, some of which are under cultivation. The banks are well-defined, and vary from 10 to 15 feet in height. Cultivation often extends up to their margin, but on the west, as far the Besiā Khāl, the land is largely covered with sand or otherwise rendered uncultivable for a width of about 2 miles. When silt is deposited and the water can be easily drained off, rich *rabi* crops are raised.

Dwārakeswar.

The third large river, the Dwārakeswar, enters the district between the villages of Mandalghāti and Mahiāri and forms its north-western boundary for 7 miles, separating the Goghāt thāna first from the Bishnupur subdivision of Bānkurā and next from

the headquarters subdivision of Burdwān. After flowing for 14 miles through the district, it divides into two branches a mile below Bāli Diwānganj. The western branch, called the Jhumjhumi, after a course of 3 miles, enters the Ghātāl subdivison of Midnapore and falls into the Silāi; while a minor distributary, turning east, reunites with the Sānkrā, some few miles above Bandar. The eastern branch, the Sānkrā, flows south-east through the Arāmbāgh and Khānākul thānas, is next joined by a distributary of the Jhumjhumi, and lower down, at Bandar, unites with the Silāi to form the Rūpnārāyan.

The bed of the Dwārakeswar, as well as of its branches, is sandy, and varies from half a mile to a quarter of a mile in width. It is navigable only in the rains, when large country boats pass up and down to the Rūpnārāyan. During the remainder of the year it is fordable at most places; and in the hot weather a bamboo foot-bridge is thrown across it at Arāmbāgh town. The river is not embanked in the northern part; but the banks are fairly high, varying from 6 to 15 feet. From Bāli on the west and from Mubārakpur on the east there are embankments for some seven miles; while two more embankments extend from the point at which it bifurcates, joining one another a little above Chāpsā. The eastern embankment from Mubārakpur has been breached in several places and gives little protection to the villages on that side. Several sandy *chars* have been thrown up on either bank, which, as a rule, are uncultivated except near Arāmbāgh town.

Rūpnārāyan.

The Rūpnārāyan is formed by the junction of the Silāi with the branches of the Dwārakeswar near Bandar. It runs south-east for 8 miles, forming the district boundary, and is joined at the extreme south-east, opposite Rānīchak, by the Kānā Dwārakeswar. The junction is not shewn in the survey map. The tide runs up as far as Bandar; and the river is navigable throughout by boats of three to four tons burden and by small inland steamers.

Gāngan or Behulā.

Among the smaller streams several may be mentioned. The Gāngan or Behulā rises in the Burdwān district, touches this district below Baddipur (in the Kālnā subdivision), and then divides into two branches, both called Behulā. The northern branch after a circuitous course falls into the Hooghly near Somrā. The southern branch cuts across the district and falls into the Magrā Khāl half-a mile west of Nayāsarai. This stream has a muddy bed and is probably a remnant of one of the old courses of the Dāmodar.

Kunti or Kānā Nadi.

The Kunti Nadī branches off from the Dāmodar just below Salimābād in the Burdwān district, and flows south-east to

Bandipur and then east to Gopālnagar. Then, curiously enough, it turns north-east, running nearly parallel to the Saraswatī, till it falls into the Hooghly at Nayâsarâi after describing a complete semicircle. The upper part is known as the Kānā Nadī, and is flushed annually from the Eden Canal; the central part is known as the Kunti Nadi; and the lower reach for a few miles as the Magrā Khāl. It has some flow of water all the year round, and large country boats go up from Nayāsarāi to Rājhāt, a distance of 8 miles. In old days this stream apparently formed a main channel of the Dāmodar for some time. It is joined near Ukli in its north-eastward journey by the Ghiā, which is fed from the north by the Kantul and Gopālnagar streams, and from the south by the Julkā, all three draining thāna Dhaniâkhāli. The stream has altogether a length of 50 miles, of which 44 miles are in the Hooghly district.

Saraswatī The Saraswati branches out from the Hooghly below Tribenī. It flows at first south-east for a mile and a half, and then runs south, parallel to and within three miles of the main river. Behind Chandernagore it curves to the south-west up to the village of Burai, west of Serampore town, and then goes south-east till it enters Howrah district, rejoining the Hooghly above Sānkrāil Below Tribenī the river is only 10 or 12 feet wide and a foot deep in the hot weather, but in the rains its width increases to a quarter of a mile and its depth to about 10 feet. Half a century ago it was a dead river, represented merely by a chain of pools; but water was let into it in connection with the Eden Canal scheme, by a cut from the Kānā Nadī near Gopālnagar; and it is now even in the summer a running, though tiny, stream. Though much silted up, its banks are fairly high (10 to 15 feet) and are still densely populated, specially in the south, where there are several large villages, such as Burai, Bāksā, Janāi, Chandītalā and Kālipur.

Bāli Khāl. Below Tribenī several creeks fall into the Hooghly after draining the interior. The southernmost of them is the Bāli (Bally) Khāl, which forms the southern boundary of the district for several miles. It drains the Dānkuni marsh, and is now used as the outfall of the Dānkuni drainage channel. In its lower reaches it is navigable throughout the year by boats of fair size, and is not fordable. Both the bed and banks are clayey, and furnish exellent material for the manufacture of bricks.

Kānā Dāmodar. The western part of the Hooghly and Serampore subdivisions is drained by several streams, apparently old offshoots of the Dāmodar. One of these, the Kānā Dāmodar, was apparently

once a large channel. It branched off from the Dāmodar a few miles below Salimābād in the Burdwān district, but its mouth is now more or less silted up. It is flushed yearly, however, from the Eden Canal. Flowing south, it is joined south-east of Kristanagar by the Kausikī, the reclamation of which has recently been taken up by Government with the help of private contributions. The combined stream then passes into the Howrah district past Jagatballabhpur, and falls into the Hooghly at Sijberiā, a mile above Uluberiā. In this portion of its course the stream, which is known as the Kālsāpā or Kānsonā Khāl, has been converted into the outfall of the Rājāpur Drainage Channel.

The Madāriā Khāl rises north of Chāmpādāngā and passing into the Howrah district falls into the Dāmodar above Amtā town. In its course through Hooghly it is called the Rānābandā. Recently, its overflow having caused much damage to crops near Amtā, the embankment along it has been raised and strengthened. Originally this stream appears to have debouched from the Dāmodar, but its intake has been closed by the embankment along its western bank. Madāriā Khāl.

Between the Dāmodar and the Dwārakeswar lie the Besiā Khāl, the Mundeswarī, and the Kānā Dwārakeswar or Dhalkisor. The Besiā Khāl has been scoured out by the Dāmodar pouring through the breach at Beguā in the Burdwān district. It flows south through Arāmbāgh thāna, nearly parallel to and within two miles of the main Dāmodar and falls into the Mundeswarī above Harinkholā. It is not shown on the survey map, but its destructive floods spread from the Mundeswarī on the west to the Dāmodar on the east. Besiā.

The Mundeswari rises in the Burdwān district, and flows south-east till joined by the Besiā Khāl above Harinkholā, where it crosses the old Benares Road. It then flows southwards and falls into the Kānā Dwārakeswar at Hayātpur. At its junction with the Besiā Khāl it is, in the cold weather, 20 yards wide and between 2 to 3 feet deep; while at Hayātpur it attains a width of 60 yards with a depth of 4 to 6 feet. It is fordable above Hayātpur after the rains, but small canoes ply up to Harinkholā throughout the year. Mundeswarī.

The Kānā Dwārakeswar or Dhalkishor branches off from the main Dwārakeswar at Chāndur, 2 miles above Arāmbāgh town, and then flows south-east until it joins the Mundeswarī at Hayātpur. The combined stream, under the name of the Kānā Nadī, turns south-west up to Khānākul, and then south, falling into the Rūpnārāyan opposite Rānichak. It has almost silted up at its intake, and where it is crossed by the old Benares Road, is nearly Kānā Dwārakeswar.

dry during the winter months. Below Basantapur it increases in size, and, where crossed by the Māyāpur-Khānākul Road, is a sluggish swampy stream some 20 feet broad and 2 feet deep. At Hayātpur, before its junction with the Mundeswarī, it is about 20 yards broad; but at Sikandarpur, 3 miles further down, it is some 60 yards wide with a depth of 5 or 6 feet in the cold weather. Below Khānākul it is not fordable, and large boats can go up to that place from the Rūpnārāyan in the rains and early winter; while smaller boats ply above Hayātpur throughout the year. The southerly portion of its course from Khānākul to Rānichak is not shewn on the survey map.

Amodar and Tārājuli Khāl.

The Amodar is a small stream which, coming from the Bānkurā district, flows south-east through Goghāt thāna, past Bhitargarh or Garh Mandāran, and is joined by the Tārājuli Khāl at the district boundary. The combined stream passes through the Ghātāl subdivision and falls into the Jhumjhumi branch of the Dwārakeswar river. The Amodar is not shewn in any old map, but it is mentioned in the introduction to the Bengali poem *Chandi* as having been crossed by the author in his journey from his home in Burdwān to the Midnapore district.

The Tārājuli Khāl also rises in the Bānkurā district, and skirting the south-western boundary of the Hooghly district, joins the Amodar 6 miles below Hājīpur. Both these streams have the usual characteristics of hill streams, viz., a quick current, banks of hard soil and gravelly beds. Except in the rains, they are fordable throughout the year.

CHANGES IN THE RIVER COURSES.

Even during the few centuries for which records are available, there have been many great changes in the courses of the rivers in this riverain district. In the river Hooghly the north-eastern portion of its course has been specially affected. Here several *chars* have formed, and the channel has shifted eastwards and become more and more tortuous. The map of Stavorinus (1769), for example, showed Guptipārā to the east of the Ganges, whereas it now lies west of the main channel, the river, which apparently once flowed just below this village, having receded a mile eastwards. One main cause of this diversion to the east was the shrinkage of the Jalangī or Khāri, once a large river which discharged a large volume of water into the Hooghly and so kept its course fairly well to the south. Now that the Jalangī has diminished in size and volume, the Hooghly is tracking more and more to the east, and is encroaching steadily on the Nadiā side. Lower down, there have been some changes in the *chars*, of which one may specially be noticed. In the seventies of last century an island was formed opposite Sāndeswartalā below

the college at Chinsura. It grew in size, and trees also sprung up on it, but it was swept away one night in the rainy season of 1898.

There is a general impression that the central section of the Hooghly has grown shallower. Of its depth before large European vessels began to go up it we have no record. The earliest mention of its depth by an European appears to be that of Cesare Federici, who remarked (1580 A. D.):—"From thence Bator upwards the ships doe not goe, because that upwards the river is very shallowe and little water"; but, he adds –"In the port of Satagan every yeere lade thirtie or five and thirtie ships great and small". According to a Muhammadan account, the Portuguese in 1632 had a large vessel with nearly two thousand persons on board moored in the river off Hooghly town. Again, in a letter of the Court of Directors to Fort St. George, Madras, dated 31st December 1662, it is stated:–"We take notice that Captain Elliott hath left a writeing with you that it is hazardless to goe up for Hugely and that the Dutch have shipps of 600 tons that Tyde it up thither." Besides this, we know that in the latter half of the 17th century, ships, like the *Falcon*, and large sloops, like the *Arrivall* and the *Ganges*, came up to the English factory at the same place. Bowrey's Chart and the Pilot Chart (1688 and 1703) shew 4 fathoms of water at Hooghly gradually increasing to 5½ or 6 fathoms opposite Barānagar. In March 1757, the three largest ships of the Company's navy, with 50 to 70 guns, sailed up to Chandernagore, though on a high tide All these facts go to show that the depth of water has really been decreasing. This decrease may be partly due to the silting up of the bed and partly to the diminished supply of water which it receives from its own intake and also from its tributaries, like the Jalangī and the Dāmodar.

Saraswatī. The changes in the Saraswatī are still more marked. The place where the three streams branch off (Tribenī, *i.e.*, three-braided) is described in a Sanskrit poem, *Pavanadūtam*, as far back as the 12th century A. D.; it is also mentioned, with a slight change of name, in Muhammadan inscriptions and books of the 13th century and later; and it is shown as a large stream in maps as late as that of Valentijn (based on information gathered in 1660-70). It is a mistake, however, to suppose that it formed the main channel of the Hooghly, though country boats and small sloops undoubtedly used it for inland traffic, as on its banks lay, and still lie, populous villages. Apparently, it formerly received water from the Kānā Nadī through a small branch taking off near Ukli, but it gradually silted up, until in

Rennell's time (1779-81) it had dwindled down to a small stream, and, except for a few miles, had become a dead river unnavigable after the rains. Lately, some water has been let in by a cut from the Kānā Nadī, but not enough to permit the passage of cargo boats throughout its length.

Dāmodar. The changes in the course of the Dāmodar have been not only numerous, but also important in view of the effect they have had on the history not only of Hooghly district, but also of Howrah and Burdwān. They can be only briefly touched upon here. Beginning from the north, one of its old branches was the Bānkā, which now rises in thāna Galsi, flows past Burdwān town, and falls into the Khāri, which in its turn joins the Bhāgirathī 6 miles above Kalnā. Rennell's Atlas shows the Bānkā as branching off from the Dāmodar, a little south-west of Burdwān town and falling into the Khāri, and then into the Bhāgīrathī above Kālnā as at present; while, after the junction with the Khāri, a branch (evidently the present Behulā I) went southwards, debouching lower down above Balāgarh. In Valentijn's map (*circa* 1670) a large stream branched off from the Dāmodar some distance below Burdwān and above "Silimath" (Salimābād), and going north-east fell into the Bhāgīrathi above "Amboc" (Ambikā Kālnā). Judging from the position of its outfall, this was most probably the old course of the Bānkā.

Bānkā Branch.

Nayāsarāi Branches. The most important of the old channels by which the Dāmodar found its way into the Hooghly were at Nayāsarāi, 3 miles above Tribenī. Here traces of at least three channels can still be found. The northernmost and shortest channel seems to have passed north of the old village of Kulingrām and then south-east to Nayāsarāi, south of Boinchi. Panduā and Khanyān. The middle channel, which was probably next in point of time, flowed south of the old fort at Kulingrām, then south-east to the north of Dwārbāsini and Mahānād, up to Magrāganj, and then north-east to Nayāsarāi. The high embankment extending for 8 miles from Tribenī to Mahānād on the west was apparently raised to protect the adjoining country against its incursions. Between it and the first channel there is still a long line of marshes, called after it the Khanyān marshes, while traces of their beds are found in the Kāsai near Panduā (the first channel), and in the Kantul and Kedārmāti near Dwārbāsini. One of these two channels, probably the second, is shown in the map of De Barros (1553-1613), and also in that of Blaev (1650), as a large stream flowing first south-east and then due east to the Bhāgīrathī, south of Chaumā and north of Sātgaon. The name Chaumā still survives in that of *pargana* Chaumuhā (four-mouthed),

the Chamuhā of *Sarkār* Sulaimānābād in Todar Mal's rent-roll. The second channel is also perhaps the same as that shown in Gastaldi's map of Asia (dated A. D. 1561, but based on older materials) as flowing south-east and falling into the Ganges above Sātgāon.

Gradually, the most easterly branch of the Dāmodar shifted still further south and assumed the tortuous course now known as the Kānā Nadī probably after an intermediate diversion along the present bed of the Ghiā. In Valentijn's map the outfall of a stream is indicated above Tribenī, but as its whole course is not shown, it cannot be stated definitely whether it represents the mouth of the second or third channel. In Rennell's Atlas, however, the third channel is distinctly entered under the name "Old Dummodah", an epithet which shows that it had then ceased to be a main channel of the Dāmodar. The process of silting up was accelerated by the course it was forced to take, its easterly flow being barred by the high banks of the Saraswatī. **Kānā Nadī Branch.**

Partly for the same reason, the other channels of the Dāmodar assumed a southerly and in the lowest reaches south-easterly course. No southerly branch appears in Gastaldi's map, probably owing to imperfect knowledge of the interior; but De Barros, followed by Blaev, clearly shows a southerly branch with two mouths and some large islands between Betcr and Pisacoly. The lower mouth is that of the present main channel opposite Faltā Reach; and the upper mouth is to be identified with that of the Kānā Dāmodar at Sijberiā, a mile above Uluberiā. In the maps and accounts of the second half of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, the lower course is named Raspas or Rasphuys and Mandalghāt, the former being a Dutch and the latter an Indian name. The other is shown as a larger and broader river with small islands at its mouth and is called Jan Perdo or John Perdo ("a river for great ships," according to the chart of 1701), the *Danei Budhā* of the palm-leaf chronicles of the Jagannāth temple of Purī. It would appear, therefore, that the Kānā Dāmodar formed the main southerly channel up to the beginning of the 18th century; its size and importance are still marked by the long marshes on both sides and by the populous villages crowded on its banks. In Rennell's time it had ceased to be a large stream, and its upper course was not even continued up to its source at Salimābād. **Kānā Dāmodar Branch.**

The present channel of the Dāmodar can be traced to the second half of the 16th century in De Barros' map, in which it is shown as one of the main channels. It could not, however, have discharged the whole or even the greater part of the **Present Main Branch.**

water brought down by the Dāmodar, as *its* capacity diminishes by more than half from the bend at Selālpur to Amtā and by one-eighth from a point 16 miles west of Burdwān to Amtā. The surplus flood-water partly spilt over the country and was partly discharged through other channels, such as the Bānkā, Kānā Nadī, Kānā Dāmodar and Madāriā Khāl on the left side, and the Mundeswarī and Kānā Dwārakeswar on the right side. Gradually, as the eastern branches silted up at their mouths, this became the main channel, but it spilt for several miles on either bank and probably widened and deepened its bed below Amtā. About 55 years ago, the left side was completely closed to spill by a high continuous embankment, while the right side was cleared by the removal of 20 miles of old embankments. After this, the river overflowed the western tract annually for a distance of several miles, till 20 years ago, when a great flood burst through the right bank at Beguā and scoured out a long channel, flowing parallel to the main stream at a distance of about 2 miles and finally swelling the volume conveyed by the Mundeswarī. The combined stream, after joining the Kānā Dwārakeswar, instead of coming eastward into the Dāmodar Khāl, has forced its way southwards and now falls into the Rūpnārāyan opposite Rānīchak. The main channel has shrunk perceptibly; while the combined stream runs wider and deeper, carrying a large influx of water into the Rūpnārāyan in the flood season.

Beṣiā Branch.

Madāriā Khāl.

The Madāriā or Rānābandā Khāl is shown in Rennell's Atlas (1779). It now rejoins the Dāmodar above Amtā, but in Rennell's time it did so several miles lower down near Bāgnān. Traces of this old course still survive in a number of *dahas* or long deep pools in its bed, and also in the present Bānspāti Khāl on the east of the Dāmodar.

Dāmodar Khāl.

On the west one finds in Rennell's Atlas only one large branch, viz., that debouching from opposite Rājbalhāt, which threw off an offshoot towards the Kānā Dwārakeswar, and after being joined by the Kānā lower down, fell into the Dāmodar above Amtā. This is now known as the Dāmodar Khāl and its offshoot as the Gujā Khāl, but the Kānā Dwārakeswar no longer falls into it.

Mundeswarī.

The Mundeswarī is an old stream, which, according to his biography, was crossed by Chaitanya about 1510 A.D., and by Kavikankan, the author of the poem *Chandī*, towards the end of the 16th century. The river is called in these works the Mantreswar and the Mudai. In Valentijn's map the combined stream of the Mundeswarī and Kānā Dwārakeswar is shown as a large river issuing from the Dāmodar above Silimath (Salimābād) and falling into the Patraghātā river (the modern Rūpnārāyan). In

Rennell's Atlas the Mundeswarī falls into the Kānā, but its upper course is not shown. In the embankment map of 1854 and the present survey map it is entered under the name "Moondasuree" with two tributaries on the east, viz., the Dansalā or "Bansain" and the Sankari or "Shankeebhanga." The stream, after receiving these two tributaries above Chanderbhan, ran south and was joined by the Gujā or Gogā Khāl; then turning south-west, it fell into the Kānā Dwārakeswar above Chingriā village. In the embankment map of 1859, prepared after the removal of the embankments on the right side of the river, a change is noticeable. Four tributaries are shown, viz., beginning from the east, the Bachurda Khāl, the Singer Khāl, and two unnamed streams. The first two joined the last two above Panlahari, and the river thus formed fell into the Mundeswarī above Mālanchā, which in its turn shifted its course a mile further west, falling as before into the Kānā above Chingriā. Since the formation of the Beguā breach, a large part of the Dāmodar water has been passing through the Besiā Khāl, which may be the easternmost of its old channels. The Besiā Khāl falls into the Mundeswarī a little above Harinkholā, and the united river then takes a short cut, and joins the Kānā Dwārakeswar at Hyātpur below the old semaphore tower. The influx of water from the Dāmodar has increased the size of the Mundeswarī, and incidentally made its bed clayey instead of sandy.

Kānā Dwārakeswar.

Lastly, the Dwārakeswar itself has undergone several important changes. It is shown in Valentijn's map (*circa* 1670) as flowing east of Sjanabath (Jahānābād) and Canna Coel (Khānākul), and as falling into the Patraghātā river (Rūpnārāyan). This course is evidently that of the Kānā Dwārakeswar or Dhalkishor, which after its junction with the Mundeswarī flows past Khānākul. The present course appears in Whitchurch's map (1776) with 'Jehanabad' on the east, and 'Dewangung' and 'Gosepour' on its west. If 'Gosepour' is correctly placed, the Sankrā branch was then the main channel flowing further east. In Rennell's Atlas, however, the old Kānā alone is shown as falling into the Dāmodar Khāl, the present course being indicated only as a small channel near Rājgarh. In both the survey map and the embankment map of 1854 the present course is entered, together with the bifurcation of the river into the Jhumjhumi and the Sankrā lower down; while the old Kānā is made to join the Mundeswarī above Chingriā and then, running south-east, fall into the Dāmodar Khāl. With the removal of the right embankments, all this changed, the first map prepared (in 1859) after the removal showing a new creek running south-west from Chingriā to the Rūpnārāyan. On the

opening of the great breach at Beguā, the Mundeswarī, now much swollen in volume, joined the Kānā at Hayātpur several miles above Chingriā; and at present their united waters run southwards into the Rūpnārāyan It may be added that the mouth by which it debouches at Chāndur is much silted up, and that the Kānā, receiving no water from the parent stream, except in the flood season, is a sluggish and shallow waterway until joined by the Mundeswarī.

As regards the present Dwārakeswar, its old course seems to have been along the Sankrā branch, according to Whitchurch; the Jhumjhumi apparently branched out subsequently, to fall into the main channel, and later on into the Silāi after a tortuous course. All these features are shown in the embankment map of 1854; and a later embankment map also shews the Sankrā as the main channel. At present both the channels seem to be of equal importance.

General remarks on the Dāmodar.

The oscillations of the Dāmodar and its connected streams establish one important fact, viz., that the streams have a general tendency to shift from south-east to south, and then to south-west. Another fact brought out clearly during the enquiries about the Dāmodar embankments was that the present main channel is too narrow for its flood discharge and that, consequently, spilling over the banks cannot be avoided. The maximum flood discharge of this river, which drains a catchment basin of 7,200 miles west of Burdwān, would be about 600,000 cubic feet per second; while the capacity of the channel at the Selālpur bend is only 163,681 cubic feet, at Santospur (18 miles lower down) 102,954 feet, at Serampore (23 miles from Selālpur) 95,237 feet, and at Amtā (43½ miles below Selālpur) 76,915 feet only. Hence the maintenance of complete lines of embankments on both sides, on their existing sites, was found impossible during heavy floods.

LAKES AND MARSHES.

There are no lakes in the district, but a number of large catchment basins are found in which water accumulates during the rains, forming long meres and marshes. Towards the close of the rains the lower lands are converted into swamps suitable for the cultivation of winter rice; and the lowest lands lying between the raised banks of rivers become *jhils* or extensive swamps. These *jhils* are partly drained by rivulets, but generally contain water in the dry months. The largest number of marshes is found in thānas Panduā and Polbā in the Hooghly subdivision, in thānas Chānditala and Krishnagar in the Serampore subdivision, and in thāna Khānākul in the Arāmbagh subdivision. Several marshes are of considerable size, *e.g.*, the Khanyān marsh between the old silted-up channels of the Dāmodar in thāna Panduā, the

marsh between the Ghiā and the Kānā Nadī, the Dānkuni marsh between the Hooghly and the Saraswatī, which is now drained by the Dānkuni drainage channel, and the marsh between the Dāmodar Khāl and the Kānā Dwārākeswar in thāna Khānākul. The reeds grown on their banks are sold for matting; and their water is used to some extent for irrigating crops of sugarcane and spring rice.

With the exception of the Goghāt thāna, the entire district is alluvial in formation. In the river beds sands and sandy *chars* are common, the sand being brought down from the uplands during floods and deposited wherever the stream is obstructed. The country inland has also been built up by silt deposits, the eastern part by deposits from the Hooghly, the western part of the Hooghly and Serampore subdivisions by deposits from the Dāmodar, and thānas Arāmbāgh and Khānākul by the combined deposits of the Dāmodar, the Mundeswarī and the Dwārakeswar. The depth of the deposits may be realized from the fact that in a boring made at Chandernagore subangular gravel of quartz and felspar were met with at a depth of about 150 feet*. The surface presents the general appearance of cup-shaped depressions between high river banks; but slight differences are observable in the soil. The silt deposits of the Hooghly and the Saraswatī are clayey, rather stiff, not easily permeated by water, and hence hard to plough; while the silt of the Dāmodar is loamy, is easily percolated, and is, therefore, more friable. The tract further west consists of loamy alluvium with a subsoil of tenacious clay and ghuting, 10 to 30 feet thick, beneath which are found green sand or other alluvial deposits. The greater part of the Goghāt thāna is rocky, consisting of the low laterite fringe of the Bānkurā uplands or of alluvium mixed with laterite débris. The only minerals extracted are laterite and *kankar* in thāna Goghāt and fine sand in the Kānā Nadī at Magrā. Limestone is said to be found along the border of the Midnapore district. GEOLOGY.

There are no forests in the district, but patches of scrub-jungle occur in thāna Goghāt, where plants characteristic of dry uplands make their appearance, such as species of *Gmelina*, *Wendlandia*, *Stipa*, *Fragus* and *Evolvulus*, which are not found, or occur only as planted species, in the rice plain. The vegetation is, on the whole, however, somewhat sparse, lacking both the large trees of the uplands and the luxuriant undergrowth of the lowlands. The rest of the Arāmbāgh subdivision is too much cut up by rivers and creeks to permit of extensive cultivation, and has the BOTANY.

* R. D. Oldham, *Manual of the Geology of India* (1893), p. 434.

usual aquatic plants and marsh weeds common to alluvial lands. The tract between the Dāmodar and the Hooghly contains the plants generally found in Lower Bengal, both cultivated and wild. First, there are reeds, sedges and aquatic plants in the marshes and swampy rice fields; next, weeds, shrubs and smaller plants in the fields and commons a little higher up; lastly, surrounding the village itself, a belt of bamboos, cocoanuts, palms, mangoes, figs, jack and other trees. The river banks, where not occupied by houses, *ghāts* or roads, are lined with bamboos, figs, tamarisks and date-palms with thick undergrowth The *chars*, being usually sandy, have very few trees; but where covered with silt, grow excellent *rabi* crops, and if slightly raised, rice crops Inland, the tanks and stagnant pools are covered with lotuses, lilies, *pānās*, both large and small, and other aquatic varieties. Generally speaking, the most noticeable botanical feature of the district is the luxuriant growth of plant life natural to a soil of great natural fertility with an abundant rainfall.

ZOOLOGY. The domestic animals of the district include cows, buffaloes, bullocks, ponies, goats, sheep, pigs, cats, dogs fowls, ducks and pigeons. Oxen are almost universally used for agricultural work and for draught. Goats, sheep, pigs, ducks and fowls are reared for food or for sale; and in some of the towns a few geese, turkeys and guinea-fowls. Among wild animals, leopards are fairly common in the north of the district from Balāgarh to Guptipārā, and are also found elsewhere. Stavorinus, writing about 1769-70, says that "tigers are very numerous in the woods, and often sally out into the inhabited places; there are likewise a vast number of wild buffaloes in the woods."* Both tigers and wild buffaloes have long since disappeared, the last occasion on which a tiger is reported to have been seen being in 1830 among the ruins of Sātgāon. Monkeys abound all over the district, especially the *hanumān* or *langur* (*Semnopithecus Entellus*). Wild hogs are common in some parts, and do a good deal of damage to crops in the Hooghly subdivision. Jackals are numerous, and other common mammals are the musk-rat, common rat, mouse, small grey-striped squirrel, civet cat, and mongoose Hares occur in some parts, especially round Dhaniakhāli, but are nowhere common. Deer have long since been exterminated. Both the ordinary small bat and the flying fox are frequent. The Gangetic porpoise (called *shusuk*) is common in the Hooghly.

Animals.

---

* According to the *India Gazette*, four tigers were killed near Chinsura in 1784.

From its flesh is extracted an oil, supposed to have much efficacy in cases of rheumatism.

In the cold weather snipe, many kinds of teal and duck, and other water-fowl abound in the numerous *jhils* and swamps. Waders of many kinds are common, besides paddy birds, sand-pipers, egrets, green-shanks, etc., while vultures get a plentiful living along the banks of the Hooghly. Several kinds of kites and hawks may be seen. The common crow and many birds of fine plumage are also fairly frequent, *e.g.*, jays, kingfishers of several varieties, wood-peckers, fly-catchers, etc. Partridges are not found. **Birds.**

Both kinds of crocodile are found in the river Hooghly, viz., the *ghariāl* or long-nosed crocodile, and the snub-nosed crocodile, known as *kumbhir;* but neither is common. The iguana or *guisāmp* occurs, and also some smaller lizards. A small harmless grass snake and the *dhāmin* are common; while the cobra and the *karait* are frequently seen **Reptiles.**

Insects of all kinds, butterflies, moths, bees, ants, beetles, etc., abound. Locusts have not been known to do much damage in the district; but a flight was seen to pass over Hooghly in 1901.*

Many kinds of fish are caught in the the rivers, marshes, fields and tanks; and the fisheries are of considerable value. Sharks also are not uncommon in the Hooghly, and occasionally seize children bathing. The following are the principal species caught for consumption. (1) Estuarine fish such as *bhetki* (*Lates calcarifer*), *hilsā* or Indian shad (*Clupea Ilisha*), *pārse* (*Mugil Parsia*), *khayrā* (*Clupea fimbriata*) and *phasā* (*Raconda russelliāna*). These come up the rivers for breeding purposes and are caught in large numbers. Mango-fish or *tapsi* (*Polynemus paradiseus*) are caught in the Hooghly river opposite the towns of Hooghly and Chinsura. (2) Of fresh-water fish found in rivers and tanks, the most valued are various members of the Indian carp family, such as *rui* (*Labeo rohita*), *kātlā* (*Catla buchanani*), *mirgel* (*Cirrhina mrigala*) *kālbāns* (*Labeo calbasu*) and *bātā* (*Labeo bātā*). Other species largely caught and sold are *chital* (*Notopterus chital*), *saralpunti* (*Barbus sarana*), *khelse* (*Trichogaster fasciatus* and *T. chuna*), *pābdā* (*Callichorus pabda*) and *tengrā* (*Macrones tengrā*). (3) In the rice fields, and in the *jhils* and roadside drains, smaller fish are caught, such as *chāndā* (*Amabassis nama, A. ranga, A. baculis*), *maurulo* (*Aspidoparia* **Fish.**

* The above account of the Fauna of the district has been contributed by the Civil Surgeon, Lt.-Col. D. G. Crawford, I.M.S.

Morar), *punti* (*Barbus putni*), etc. They form valuable accessories to the scanty diet of the poorer classes. (4) Several fresh water fish thriving in muddy stagnant water are highly prized, *e.g.*, *māgur* (*Clarius māgur*), *koi*, (*Anabas scandens*), *singi* (*Saccobranchus fossilis*), *sol* (*Ophiocephalus striatus*), and *lātā* (*Ophiocephalus punctatus*). The first three are prescribed for invalids and convalescents. (5) The rivers also abound in crustacea, especially shrimps, prawns and crabs, which are largely consumed. Oysters have not been found within the district, but other molluscs are not wanting. They are not used for food, but the shells are burnt for the manufacture of lime.

The climate of the district, on the whole, differs but little from that of Calcutta, being hot and moist. The weather is pleasantly cool, however, in the cold season, which lasts from November to February, the mean temperature falling to 65° F. in January, with a diurnal variation of 20° to 25°. During this season the prevailing winds are from the north and north-west, the mean pressure rising from 29·95 to 30·05 in December and January and falling to 30·0 in February. Much dew is precipitated in the first two months, and humidity is reduced to 60 per cent. of saturation and the aqueous pressure to ·450 in February. Clouds almost entirely disappear, and the rainfall is scanty, usually not exceeding an inch. After the first week of November cyclones from the sea also cease; but storms occasionally spring up from inland.

Hot season.

The hot season begins in March, and continues till the first week of June. The wind blows from the sea, veering from south-west to south; and the mean pressure falls slowly from 29·90 to 29·60. As the season advances, the weather grows hotter and hotter, tempered, however, in the afternoon by a fairly cool sea-breeze. The temperature rises from 80° in March to 105° in the first week of June, and both day and night grow almost equally hot, the mean diurnal variation falling to about 15° in May. Humidity and aqueous vapour pressure increase, though slowly, the mean humidity rising from between 60 and 70 per cent. in March to between 70 and 80 per cent. in May, and the mean aqueous pressure from ·650 in March to ·850 in May The number of cloudy days increases, and rainfall rises to over 5 inches in May. Hailstorms occur in March and April, and a few land storms in March. Sea storms first begin to be frequent in May with some severe cyclones. Towards the end of May and the beginning of June, the sea breeze often fails, making the days sultry and the nights oppressive, this being the prelude to the burst of the south-west monsoon.

The rainy season begins with the arrival of the south-west monsoon, generally in the second week of June, and lasts till October. The wind blows steadily from the sea, veering from south to south-east; and the mean wind pressure falls from 29·60 to 29·45 in July, rising again to 29·70 in September. The air becomes somewhat cooler with the abundant rainfall, temperature falling from 105° in June to 75° to 80° in September; but the diurnal variation is small, being not more than 10°. Humidity is necessarily high, rising to 90 per cent. of saturation in July and August; and aqueous vapour pressure is higher than at any other time in the year, being ·950 to 1·000 in July and ·950 in the other months. Cloudy days are relatively numerous, and the rainfall heavy, the largest monthly fall, viz., over 12 inches, being recorded in July and August. Cyclones and storms form in the north-west corner of the Bay in the last three months (July to September). Though not so hot, the weather is trying and sultry from the middle of August to the middle of September, this period being vulgarly known as "*Pachā Bhādra*", *i.e.*, the sodden month of Bhādra. **Rainy season.**

The south-west monsoon returns seaward between October and the first week of November. The direction of the wind changes to north, and the mean pressure, though very variable, rises to 29·90. The mean temperature falls slowly to 75°; the days are fairly hot, but the nights become cooler, the diurnal variation being 15°. Humidity is reduced, but very slowly, to 75 per cent. and the aqueous pressure to ·800. Dews become heavier and more frequent at night, clouds decrease, and the monthly rainfall becomes less than 5 inches. During the retreat of the monsoon, storms and cyclones are frequent, some of the severest cyclones occurring in the last week of October and the first week of November.

The climate of thāna Goghāt differs somewhat from that sketched above and is more like that of Bānkurā. It is drier and somewhat colder, less rain also being received in the cold months. In the summer it is hotter with less of the sea-breeze, and with a small rainfall. In the monsoon season the rainfall is rather heavier, but owing to the more undulating nature of the country is more easily drained off.

The rainfall of the Hooghly district is ordinarily ample, averaging nearly 59 inches per annum. Its fluctuations are, however, considerable, varying from 42·8 inches in 1895-96 to 72·7 inches in 1900-01. The minimum recorded is a little over 39 inches in 1873 and 1874; and the maxima are over 76 inches in 1871 and over 72 inches in 1883 and 1888. The heaviest **Rainfall.**

monthly falls were in September 1900 (31·97 inches), and August 1885 (26·33 inches); while the heaviest fall on a single day (9·70 inches) was recorded on 21st September 1900.

The following table shows the average rainfall at the three recording stations for the cold season, the hot season and the monsoon season, respectively :—

Station.	Years recorded.	November to February.	March to May.	June to October.	Annual average.
Hooghly ...	37–40	2·43	9·89	45·71	58·03
Serampore...	29–30	2·44	8·52	48·22	59·18
Arāmbāgh ..	29–30	1·95	8·15	48·76	58·86
Average ...		2·27	8·85	47·56	58·69

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

FROM the configuration of the district, a low-lying tract, traversed by numerous rivers with a series of marshes between them, it may be presumed that its earliest inhabitants were tribes of fishermen and boatmen. This supposition is confirmed by the predominance, down to the present day, of fishing castes like the Kaibarttas and the Bāgdis. The former, indeed, can be traced to very early times, their name being found in the *Manu Samhitā* and the two great Sanskrit epics, the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*, and also in the colloquial form of *Kevata* in Asoka's Pillar Edict V. The Bāgdis seem to have been an aboriginal tribe of West Bengal, whose origin is indicated not only by their non-Sanskritic name and their peculiar features, but also by certain customs to which they still adhere and by their low position in the Hindu social scale. The Kaibarttas predominate in the south, the Bāgdis in the north and west; while the Sadgops are also found in strength in the western tracts, where they may have migrated after the Bāgdis. PREHISTORIC PERIOD.

At the dawn of history this part of the country was probably included in the territory held by the Suhmas, a tribe mentioned in juxtaposition with the Angas, Vangas and Pundras in the *Mahābhārata* and also in the *Mahābhāshya*, a grammar dating back to the second century B. C. In the epic the Suhmas are said to have been born of the queen of Bali by the blind Brāhman sage Dīrghatamas, while according to the *Ayārānga-sutta*, one of the oldest Jaina scriptures, *Subba-bhūmi*, or Suhma-land, was a part, apparently the eastern part, of *Lādha* (Sanskrit Rādhā). These references, fragmentary though they are, afford some grounds for the belief that the land had been colonized by Aryans, including Brāhmans and other high castes, long before the birth of Christ.* EARLY HINDU PERIOD.

There can be no doubt that in the third century B. C. the territory of the Suhmas was included in the vast empire of Asoka

* For detailed references to Suhma and Rādhā, see M. M. Chakravarti, *Notes on the Geography of Old Bengal*, J. A. S. B., 1908, pp. 284—287.

which extended over the whole of Bengal as far as the mouths of the Ganges and up to Tāmralipti (the modern Tamluk). They may indeed have been subdued before this by Asoka's grandfather Chandragupta, or even earlier by the Nandas, for in 326 B. C. Alexander was informed of the power of the Gangaridæ and Prasii, whose king had under him a force of 20,000 horse, 200,000 foot, 2,000 chariots and 3,000 or 4,000 elephants. The capital of the Prasii was at Pātaliputra (Patna) in Magadha; and the Gangaridæ occupied all the country about the mouths of the Ganges. They are mentioned by Virgil in the third Georgic, and Ptolemy describes their capital, Gange, as an important seat of commerce on the Ganges. According to some, the site of this capital was at Sātgāon, though the theory does not appear very plausible. However this may be, the tract included in the present district must have shared in the civilization of the Mauryan empire, though no remains of that time have survived. The road to Kalinga probably passed then, as later, through thāna Goghāt or a little to the west of it; and it is most likely that a number of Brāhmans and other high castes migrated here from up-country, and that a few Buddhists and Nigranthas (Jainas) also settled in the land.

Several centuries later this tract became absorbed with the rest of Bengal in the Gupta empire, owing to a successful campaign by Samudragupta in the fourth century. The record of this conquest is contained in an inscription on the Iron Pillar of Delhi, which asserts that "when warring in the Vanga country, he confronted and destroyed the enemies confederate against him."* A century later we find the Suhmas distinctly mentioned in Kāli Dāsa's poem *Raghuvansa* (*circa* 480-490 A.D.), which, in describing the conquests of Raghu, says that "from him, the rooter-out of the unbent, the Suhmas saved their lives by following a cane-like course, as against a river torrent".† This reference to canes bending before the stream is quite appropriate to such a tract of reed-bordered marshes and rivers as Hooghly and the adjoining districts.

LATER HINDU PERIOD. On the disruption of the Gupta empire the Suhmas apparently became independent, the *Dasakumāracharita*, or story of the ten princes, stating that the Suhma kingdom extended so far south that it included Dāmalipti and the sea-coast.‡ In the beginning of the seventh century, it appears to have been conquered by the powerful king of Bengal, Sasānka of Karnasuvarna (Gaur); and

* Smith's *Early History of India*, (1908) p. 275.

† *Raghuvansa*, IV, 35.

‡ Sixth *Uchchhāsa*.

a few years later, in the second quarter of that century, it became a part of the great empire of Silāditya Harshavardhana. The name Suhma, however, was apparently unknown to the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang (Hiuen Tsiang), who, in describing his travels in the middle of the seventh century, mentions only two kingdoms in south-west Bengal, viz., Karnasuvarna and Tāmralipti. It appears, however, occasionally in later Sanskrit works, the latest reference being in the *Pavanadūtam*, a work of the 12th century, which mentions Vijayapurī (probably Nadiā) as its capital.*

The name Rādhā now superseded Suhma as a common designation for Western Bengal. Rādhā, we know, was subdivided into a northern and southern tract, each probably with a separate ruler, and Hooghly would naturally fall within South Rādhā. According to three Tāmil inscriptions, the great Chola emperor, Rājendrachola Deva, is said to have conquered South Rādhā with its king Ranasūra in 1021-23 A.D.,† but this alleged conquest cannot have been more than an inroad, as no traces of Chola domination have been found, and South Rādhā is mentioned as a kingdom in the *Prabodha-chandrodayam*, an allegorical drama composed at the end of 11th century.

In the 12th century Chodaganga of the Eastern Ganga dynasty followed up his conquest of Orissa by invading South-West Bengal. According to inscriptions, he defeated the king of Mandār,‡ the Sanskrit form of Mandāran in thāna Goghāt, and apparently annexed his country, which included Tamluk. The northern and eastern part of the district, however, passed into the hands of the Sena kings of Bengal, for the *Pavanadūtam* distinctly puts Suhma, with the sacred Tribenī, under Ballāla Sena.§ The Dāmodar, therefore, must have then formed the south-western boundary of the Sena kingdom.

EARLY MUHAMMADAN RULE.

The country remained under Hindu rule for some time longer, escaping the raid made on Nadiā by Muhammad-i-Bakhtyār Khiljī in 1199 A.D. By 698 H. (1298 A.D.), however, the northern part of the district had passed into the hands of the Muhammadan conquerors; for Zafar Khān's mosque at Tribenī bears that date, and his Madrasa is dated a few years later. Tribenī, and afterwards Sātgāon (Sanskrit Saptagrām) was the head-quarters of the local Muhammadan governors; and the importance of the latter place was recognized by its being

* M. M. Chakravarti, J. A. S. B., 1905, pp. 45, 58.

† *South Indian Inscriptions*, I, p. 96; II, 106-07; Mysore *Arch. Sur. Rep.* for 1908-09, para. 70, p. 17.

‡ M. M. Chakravarti, J. A. S. B., 1903, p. 110.

§ M. M. Chakravarti, J. A. S. B., 1905, pp. 44, 58.

made a mint-town: the earliest existing coin minted at Sātgaon is dated 729 H. (1329 A.D.).* Its importance may also be gathered from the fact that when in 1338 A.D. Fakhr-ud-dīn Mubārak Shāh rebelled and killed Kadr Khān, the Governor of Lakhnautī, one of his first steps, after sacking that town and plundering the treasury, was to secure possession of Sātgāon as well as of Sunārgāon.† Local legend asserts that about this time a Muhammadan warrior saint, named Shāh Safi-ud-dīn, overcame the Hindus under the chiefs of Panduā and Mahānād, and in 1340 erected a *minār* at Panduā to commemorate his victory. There is nothing improbable in the date ascribed to the *minār*, but the legend has not been corroborated by any authentic account. and is at variance with the fact that the Muhammadans had been in possession of the country as far south as Tribenī before 1298 A.D. In any case, however, their sway did not yet extend beyond the Dāmodar; for according to the palm-leaf chronicles of the Jagannāth temple at Purī, the Ganga kingdom was bounded on the north by the river Danei Budhā (the Jan Perdo of Europeans), an old form of the name Dāmodar. The subdivision of Arāmbāgh and the part of the Serampore subdivision lying south of the Kānā Dāmodar were, therefore, included in Orissa.

In the time of the Delhi Emperor Muhammad Shāh Tughlak (1324-51), Muhammadan Bengal was divided into three sub-provinces with head-quarters at Lakhnautī, Sātgāon and Sunārgāon, Sātgāon being placed under Izz-ud-dīn Yahyā Azam-ul-Mulk. Subsequently, when the Sultāns of Bengal had acquired independence, the three sub-provinces were reunited under Sikandar Shāh, the second of the line (1358-1390); but Sātgāon continued to be the seat of a local Governor and a mint-town.‡ It is not known whether it acknowledged the rule of the Hindu usurper, Rājā Kansa *alias* Ganesh (1409-1415), but it certainly was a part of the kingdom of his son and successor Jadu *alias* Jalāl-ud-dīn Muhammad Shāh (1415-1430). Mahmud Shāh I, who overthrew Kansa's grandson, continued to be in possession of Sātgāon, and according to two inscriptions of his reign, his son, Prince

* *Catalogue of the coins in the Indian Museum*, 1907, Nelson Wright, Vol. II page 53, No. 324; *List of coins in the Lahore Museum*, Roger, p. 89, No. 2. For a silver coin of 730 H., minted at Sātgāon, *see* Thomas' *Chronicles of the Pathān Kings*, p. 214, and *Indian Museum Catalogue, II*, p. 53, No. 325.

† Elliot, III, 243.

‡ For three silver coins of Sikandar Shāh minted at Sātgāon, see *Catalogue of the Indian Museum Coins* (Bengal), Sir James Bourdillon, vol. II, p. 155, Nos. 56 to 58

§ Two silver coins of his minted at Sātgāon are described by Sir James Bourdillon in the *Catalogue of the Indian Museum Coins*, (Bengal), vol. II, p. 160-2, Nos. 99 and 100.

Barbak Shāh, was its Governor in 1456, while Tarbiyat Khān built a mosque there in 1457.

The extent of the Sātgāon governorship varied according to vigour of the Governors, but generally speaking the Dāmodar formed the boundary until the time of Husain Shāh (1493-1520), when its limits were extended beyond that river. According to the biographies of Chaitanya, the Yavana rule spread westwards up to the Mundeswarī river, and southwards up to Pichhaldā on the Rūpnārāyan, and they speak of the destruction of temples and of the dread created by the Yavana king, which put a stop to travel in the western part of Hooghly. We also know that one of Husain's generals, Ismail Ghāzī, seized the fort at Mandāran, where there is still a tomb ascribed to him; so that almost the whole of the district was included in Husain Shāh's kingdom.

THE AFGHANS.

During the weak rule of Husain Shāh's descendants, the extent of Muhammadan territory was gradually reduced, until the last king Mahmud Shāh III was overthrown by Sher Shāh in 1536. That vigorous monarch subdivided Bengal into several sub-provinces, each with a separate governor and all under the control of Kāzi Fazilet. This system was, however, abolished by Sher Shāh's son Islam Shāh, on whose death in 1552 Shams-ud-din Muhammad Shāh Ghāzī, the Nawāb of Bengal, became independent and occupied Sātgāon.* Troubled times followed. Bengal was seized by the Afghān Governor of Bihār, Sulaimān Kararāni; while Telingā Mukunda Harichandan, the last independent Hindu king of Orissa, conquered South-Western Bengal up to Tribenī. Ultimately, in 1567-68, Sulaimān's army attacked the king of Orissa while at Tribenī, and forced him to retreat to Fort Kotsamā, probably the modern Kotsimul on the west bank of the Dāmodar. Sulaimān's son, Bayazid, and his general Illāhābād Kālāpāhār, then invaded Orissa through the hilly country known by the generic name of Jhārkhand. Internal revolt having broken out, the Orissa king hurriedly retired southwards and was killed while fighting the rebels. After this, Sulaimān's army overran Orissa and annexed it as far as the Chilkā lake. The name of the conqueror still survives in the town of Salimābād on the Dāmodar and in *Sarkār* Sulaimānābād; but his chief claim to fame is perhaps the skill and vigour with which he consolidated the Muhammadan power in the newly conquered territory.

---

* For a silver coin of Shams-ud-dīn, dated 962 H. (1554 A. D.) and minted at Sātgāon, *see* J. A. S. B., 1880, p. 84, pl. VI, No. 8.

The Afghān rule collapsed, however, in the hands of his son, the handsome but inefficient Dāūd Shāh Having defied Akbar, he was forced to fly from Patna to Sātgāon, and was next decisively defeated at Mughalmāri near Takroi in the Midnapore district, a battle which secured for the Mughals the sovereignty of Bengal. On the death of Akbar's governor, Munim Khān, Dāūd again revolted, but was defeated, captured and executed at Agmahāl, his head being sent to the Emperor (1576). The conquest was still far from effective, for the formidable rebellion of the military *jāgīrdārs* soon broke out; and the Afghāns in Orissa took advantage of it to invade South-West Bengal. Their leader, Katlu Khān, defeated Mirzá Najat Khān, the Governor of Sātgāon, who fled to the Portuguese at Hooghly, and for four years Burdwān and Midnapore, with the intervening subdivision of Arāmbāgh, became the theatre of war between the Afghāns and Mughals. Ultimately peace was concluded, leaving Katlu in possession of Orissa.

In 1590, hostilities were resumed by Mān Singh, the Governor of Bihār, who invaded Orissa, advancing through Burdwān and halting at Jahānābād till the rains were over. Thence he sent a detachment southwards under his son Jagat Singh, who was defeated; but Katlu having died, a peace was again patched up. Another war followed in 1592, when Mān Singh, marching through Jahānābād, routed the Afghāns near Midnapore and annexed the whole of Orissa.* In 1600, during the temporary absence of Mān Singh at Ajmir, the Afghāns under Usmān once more revolted and, having defeated the imperialists, occupied the whole of South-West Bengal. Mān Singh hurried back, defeated the Afghāns at Sherpur Atāi in Bīrbhūm, and forced them to retire to Orissa.† There was thus almost incessant warfare for a quarter of a century, and it is not surprising that Akbar's historian Abul Fazl gave Bengal the name of *bulghakkhanā*, meaning the 'home of revolts.'

The district of Hooghly did not escape the horrors of war, for the Arāmbāgh subdivision (with the adjoining parts of Burdwān and Midnapore, through which the royal road passed) was frequently ravaged. A graphic description of the anarchy and oppression prevailing has been left in the introduction to the poem *Chandī* by Kavikankan, who towards the end of the 16th century was forced by the exactions of the tax collectors to migrate from his home in the Burdwān district

* *Akbarnāmā*, Elliot, VI, 86, 89-90; *Tabakāt-i-Akbari*, Elliot, V, 465.

† *Do.*, Elliot, VI, 98; *Ain-i-Akbari*, Blochmann, I, 341.

to Aradā in Midnapore district, then under a Hindu chief. Inland trade was at a standstill; the coinage was debased; the lands lay uncultivated, though taxes were still forced from the people; revenue and rents were screwed up to a high figure and on non-payment both landlords and tenants were forcibly seized, beaten and thrown into prison; life and property were insecure. On the other hand, the tract lying along the river Hooghly, being farthest from the high road to Orissa, escaped the ravages of the opposing factions, and was comparatively unmolested. Here trade, especially trade with European countries, flourished; and it was during the Afghān rule that the Portuguese settled at Hooghly and established the first European settlement. This subject will be dealt with in the next chapter.

During the long and strong administration of Mān Singh (1590-1606) the Afghāns were gradually brought under control, and the larger Hindu zamīndārs reduced to submission. Peace being restored, Todar Māl's rent-roll—in itself only a compilation from older rent-rolls with slight changes—was enforced. The Hooghly district was now divided between three *Sarkārs*, viz., Sātgāon, Sulaimānābād and Mandāran.* Sātgāon town, although its importance was diminishing with the decline of its trade, still continued to be the seat of the local governor, but was gradually superseded as a commercial centre by Hooghly with its large Portuguese trade. The latter trade, however, received a fatal blow in 1631, when the Emperor Shāh Jahān gave orders for the destruction of the Portuguese settlement, the fort being captured and the survivors deported to Agra. From this time Hooghly became the royal port of Bengal, and the Governor's headquarters were removed there from Sātgāon. THE MUGHAL RULE.

For more than a century after this (*i.e.*, until 1739) the district, with the rest of Bengal enjoyed comparative peace and prosperity. Cultivation extended, and trade increased in spite of the exactions of the higher officials and the frequent interference of their subordinates. The inland tracts were opened out, and the price of food grains became at times extraordinarily cheap, rice being sold in the time of Nawāb Shāista Khān at two annas per maund.† The sea-borne trade also flourished, for though the Portuguese commerce had fallen off, the English, French, Dutch, Danes, Flemish and Germans all had settlements on the banks of the Hooghly. The general prosperity of the country may be gathered from Bernier's account "In a word, Bengale abounds with every

* *Ain-i-Akbari*, Jarrett, II, pp. 140-1.

† *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, Bible. Ind., translation, p. 228.

necessary of life; and it is this abundance that has induced so many Portuguese, half-castes, and other Christians, driven from their different settlements by the Dutch, to seek an asylum in this fertile kingdom. The Jesuits and Augustins, who have large churches and are permitted the free and unmolested exercise of their religion, assured me that Ogouli alone contains from eight to nine thousand Christians, and that in other parts of the kingdom their number exceeded five-and-twenty thousand. On both banks of the Ganges, from Rajemahale to the sea, is an endless number of channels, cut, in bygone ages, from that river with immense labour, for the conveyance of merchandise and of the water itself, which is reputed by the Indians to be superior to any in the world. These channels are lined on both sides with towns and villages, thickly peopled with Gentiles." Elsewhere, Bernier in describing his voyage from Pipli to Hooghly, remarked—"My eyes seemed never sated with gazing on the delightful country through which we passed."

There is, however, a reverse side to the picture Bernier himself says that the Firinghi or Portuguese pirates of Chittagong "scoured the neighbouring seas in light galleys, called galleasses, entered the numerous arms and branches of the Ganges, ravaged the islands of Lower Bengale, and, often penetrating forty or fifty leagues up the country, surprised and carried away the entire population of villages on market days, and at times when the inhabitants were assembled for the celebration of a marriage, or some other festival. The marauders made slaves of their unhappy captives, and burnt whatever could not be removed." The account given by a Muhammadan historian, Shihāb-ud-dīn Tālish, at the end of the 17th century, would seem to show that Hooghly could not have escaped the raids of the Magh and Firinghi pirates, for he mentions Hooghly, with Jessore and Bhushnā, as places plundered by them when they moved up the Ganges.*

Except for such raids, the internal peace of the district was only twice disturbed. The first occasion was in 1686-89, when war broke out between the British and the Mughals. There was some fighting in the town, but the British, after a temporary success, abandoned their factory, and the rest of the campaign took place outside the district. Ten years later a serious rebellion broke out. Subhā Singh, a zamīndār of *parganas* Chitwā and Bārdā in the Ghātāl subdivision of the Midnapore district, becoming dissatisfied with the government, joined hands with

* *The Feringi Pirates of Chittagong,* J.A.S.B., June 1907, p. 424.

Rahīm Khān, an Afghān chief of Orissa. Their levies marched through the Arāmbāgh subdivision to Burdwān, slew the Rājā, Krishna Rām, in battle, and seized his family and property. The rebels next took Hooghly and spread over West Bengal, capturing Murshidābād, Cossimbazar, Rājmahāl and Mālda.

The fall of Hooghly was due to the cowardice of Nurullah Khān, *Faujdār* or military commandant of Hooghly, Jessore, Burdwān and Midnapore, who, it is said, had long employed himself in commerce and amassing wealth, and possessed nothing of the military character but the name. When ordered by the Nawāb to attack the rebels, he, after a long delay, gathered together some troops, marched from Jessore and crossed the river. On the approach of the Afghāns, he retreated, and, having shut himself up in the fort of Hooghly, implored assistance from the Dutch governor of Chinsura. The rebels, convinced by this pusillanimous conduct that they had little to fear from the "merchant soldier," advanced boldly and lay siege to Hooghly. So persistent and vigorous were their attacks, that the *Faujdār*, alarmed for his personal safety, fled across the river at night, and made his way to Jessore. The garrison, finding their commandant had fled, opened the gates, and the rebels got possession of the city without loss.*

Shortly afterwards the rebels were driven from Hooghly to Sātgāon by the fire of two ships which the Dutch governor sent up; but by March 1697, they held the whole country west of the Hooghly river, and were closely investing the fort at Tanna. Their successes soon came to an end. Subhā Singh was stabbed to death by the daughter of Krishna Rām, when he sought to outrage her. The imperial army, hurriedly gathered together under Zabardast Khān, son of the Nawāb Ibrāhim Khān, defeated Rahīm Khān at Bhagwāngolā in May 1697, and pursued him to Burdwān. In the meantime, Ibrāhim Khān had been recalled and Prince Azim-us-Shān appointed in his stead, upon which Zabardast Khān retired to the Emperor's camp in the Deccan. Rahīm Khān, taking advantage of this respite, made fresh incursions into Burdwān, Hooghly and Nadiā. He next attacked the prince's camp in the outskirts of Burdwān, but was killed in the battle which ensued. His followers were then hunted down, until the land was cleared of the Afghān raiders.†

This period witnessed several important administrative changes. Three settlements of land revenue took place, viz., (1) in the ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

* C. Stewart, *History of Bengal* (1847), p. 207.

† *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, pp. 231-43; Stewart, *History of Bengal* (1847), pp. 206-216.

second half of Prince Sháh Shujā's rule (1649-58), (2) in the time of Murshid Kuli Khān (*circa* 1722), and (3) in Shujā-ud-dīn's time (*circa* 1728). The first made no material change in Todar Mal's rent-roll, but radical reforms were introduced by Murshid Kuli Khān. He divided Bengal into 13 *chaklās* instead of *sarkārs*, the *parganas* being retained, but in some cases subdivided. Under this arrangement Hooghly district fell under two *chaklās*, Hooghly or Sātgāon and Burdwān. In the revised rent-roll of Shujā-ud-dīn's time, the country was divided into *khālsā* lands consisting of (1) large and small zamīndāris and *sayar* or customs, etc., and (2) the *jāgīrs* of the *Faujdārs*. Hooghly district was apparently divided between the large zamīndāri of Burdwān, and the small zamīndāris of Mandalghāt, Arsā and Muhammad Amīnpur, and was assessed to *sayars* of *baksh-bandar*, *i.e.*, port dues and ground rents.*

The Emperor Aurangzeb, always suspicious of his proconsuls, set up a dual government in Bengal by appointing a Diwān. The military and political administration was controlled by the Nawāb Nāzim; but the revenue and financial administration was placed in the hands of the Diwān, who was appointed directly by the Emperor. Both were to be guided by rules and regulations laid down in the *Dastur-ul-Amal*, *i.e.*, a code of procedure periodically issued under the Emperor's orders.† This dual government was practically abolished in 1707, when the Diwān Murshid Kuli Khān secured the post of Deputy Nāzim, and ceased a few years later when he became Nawāb Nāzim of Bengal and Orissa. Bihār was added to Bengal in the time of Nawāb Shujā-ud-dīn, who divided his satrapy into four divisions:—(1) West Bengal, (2) East Bengal, (3) Bihār and (4) Orissa. The first division the Nawāb kept under his direct charge; and each of the other divisions he placed under a Deputy Nāzim.‡

HOOGHLY. *Faujdārs*

Hooghly was under a *Faujdār* or Military Governor, assisted by a *Naib* of the Diwān, called the Comptroller of Customs, or the Deputy Governor, in the English Factory records. The following *Faujdārs* of Hooghly can be traced. Malik Beg was in charge from 1647 to 1667,§ but apparently not continuously, for in 1664 we find one Muhammad Sharif, who was deputed to fortify Sangrāmgarh before the conquest of Chittagong by Shāista Khān,||

* J. Grant's Analysis of the Finances of Bengal, Appendix to the *Fifth Report of the Select Committee*, 1812, Madras, pp. 246-72.

† *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, pp. 247-48.

‡ *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, p. 303, Note 2.

§ Thomas Bowrey, *Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, p. 183, Note 1.

|| The *Feringhi Pirates of Chittagong*, J. A. S. B., June 1907, p. 421.

described as the late *Faujdār* of Hooghly. Malik Kāsim, the son of Malik Beg, was twice Governor, viz., in 1668-72, and again in 1674-81. He is referred to unfavourably in the English records for having interfered with their trade and exacted money from them.* He seems to have been succeeded by "Suffede" Mahmud, whom William Hedges, the English Agent, met at Dacca in November 1682.† The latter was probably replaced by Malik "Burcoordar" (Barkhwardār), who threatened to proceed against Hedges on a complaint made by one Thomas Haggerston in November 1684,‡ and was subsequently deputed by the Nawāb to negotiate with Job Charnock. The *Faujdār* at the time of the first 'eruption' of the English in Hooghly town (October 1686), was Abdul Ghani;§ and in June 1704 one Mīr Ibrāhim was the Governor.|| In the middle of 1708, Ziā-ud-dīn Khān (Zeaude Cawn of the records), was appointed Governor direct by the Emperor and took charge in May 1710.¶ He was friendly to the English and other Europeans, but was on bad terms with Murshid Kuli Khān, who selected Mirzā Wali Beg as *Faujdār* on his own authority. The two took up arms to support their claims, the struggle ending in the defeat of Wali Beg.** Eventually, Ziā-ud-dīn retired in June 1713, on being transferrred to Coromandel as Dīwān.

In 1713, Mīr Nasir became the Governor. In February 1714 he received from the British the value of Rs. 500 in goods at prime cost, "it being a custom of many years' standing to give presents once a year to the persons in the Government at Hugly, and those now there (though we gave them nothing last year) having been always friendly and obliging to us and ever worked so as to get the stops on our trade taken off". A few months later we find him demanding the surrender of the family of a recalcitrant zamīndār, Sitārām, then hiding in Calcutta. The demand was promptly complied with by the English, but his present was reduced next year to Rs. 350.†† In the time of Murshid Kuli Khān, another *Faujdār*, Ashan-Ullah Khān, attacked the Bānkibazar factory of the Ostend Company in 1723 and captured it.‡‡ Of this Governor a story is told that he had a

---

* Thomas Bowrey, *Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, pp. 183, note 2, 185, note 1.

† *Diary* of William Hedges, Yule, I, p. 46.

‡ *Do.*, Yule, I, 164.

§ *Do.*, Yule, II, 54.

|| *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Wilson, I, 252.

¶ *Ditto* I, 329, 332.

** *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, 262-4; *Early Annals*, I, 341, II, 4, etc., 28, etc.,—378.

†† *Early Annals*, II, 116, 139, 160, 166, 168, 212.

‡‡ *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, 276-78; Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, 1727, II, p. 19.

favourite *Kotwāl* (the city police officer), who enticed away the daughter of a Mughal. Ashan-Ullah Khān tried to screen him, but the Mughals complained to the Nawāb, Murshid Kuli Khān, who had the *Kotwāl* stoned to death.* Ashan-Ullah Khān was transferred by order of the next Nawāb, Shujā-ud-dīn, who conferred the post on an old friend Pīr Khān *alias* Shujā Kuli Khān. The new *Faujdār's* rapacity brought him into collision with the English, Dutch and French, and is said to have ruined the port of Hooghly. On one occasion his confiscation of some English goods led to the despatch of British troops from Calcutta.†

LAST DAYS OF MUGHAL RULE.

The *Faujdār* last named held office till 1740, when he took part in the battle of Gheriā, throwing in his lot with the Nawāb Sarfarāz Khān, against the ambitious Alī Vardi Khān. The victory of the latter won for him the mastery of Bengal, and ushered in 25 years of war, during which the land had little peace. He followed up his victory by marching through Arāmbāgh and Midnapore to Orissa, where he defeated Murshid Kuli Khān II, Governor of Orissa and Sarfarāz Khān's brother-in-law, and then seized that province. Shortly afterwards Mīr Habib, with the adherents of Murshid Kuli, revolted and imprisoned Alī Vardi Khān's Governor, whereupon the Nawāb again marched south and quelled the rebellion. While marching leisurely back, he was met and surrounded at Burdwān by a Marāthā army under Bhāskar Pandit. He lost most of his baggage, artillery and tents, and his half-starved army had to cut their way through to Kātwā. The Marāthās then spread over West Bengal, one body seizing Hooghly.

Mīr Habib had for some time been negotiating with the merchants of Hooghly, and in particular with two named Mīr Abul Hasan and Mīr Abul Kāsim, who were on familiar terms with the Governor. These two merchants helped Mīr Habib in the stratagem by which he took the town. Coming one night when the fort gates were closed, they sent word that they had important news for the Governor. On this, the gates were opened and Mīr Habib with 15 men got in and seized the Governor. They then sent word of their success to a Marāthā general, Sib Rao, who was waiting close to the town with a body of troops. Sib Rao at once marched on Hooghly, which quietly submitted, and was appointed Governor of the town. "This expedition having produced much money, which arose from contributions or from the revenues of the country or from the port duties of so celebrated a mart, the Marāthā General commenced perpending all the consequences and all the value of his sojourning in Bengal, and he resolved to make Kātwā

---

* *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, p. 284.

† *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, pp. 294-95.

his headquarters. From that time Mīr Habib became his Prime Minister; and that transfuge, who was a very active man, used to transact business sometimes at Kātwā and sometimes Hooghly.*"

In October 1742 Bhāskar Pandit, who had begun to collect revenue from the zamīndārs, was defeated at Kātwā by Alī Vardi and driven out of Bengal. Next year Bhāskar's master, Raghujī Bhonslā of Nāgpur, and Bālajī Rāo, the head of the Marāthās at Poona, advanced to Bengal with large armies, both of which mercilessly plundered the towns and villages of West Bengal. Alī Vardi bought off Bālajī and then advanced with him against Raghujī, who fled before the combined force. In 1744 Bhāskar Pandit returned. The Nawāb invited him and his generals into his tent at Mānkara under the pretext of discussing a treaty and had them murdered; he then routed the disorganized Marāthā forces and drove them out of Bengal.

No sooner was Alī Vardi Khān free from the menace of the Marāthās than he had to face a formidable revolt of his own Afghān officers, who broke out, headed by his Commander-in-chief, Mustaphā Khān. The Bhonslā chief also, enraged at the murder of his general, sent a fresh force under his son Jānojī, which conquered Orissa, and again ravaged West Bengal and South Bihār. After several years of guerilla warfare Alī Vardi Khān, wearied by constant warfare and his extreme old age, made peace with the Marāthās in 1751, ceding to them Orissa up to the banks of the Subanarekhā river and agreeing to pay 12 lakhs of rupees as *chauth* for Bengal. From this time till his death in 1756 the land had a little breathing space; but in the meantime the wars had caused immense destruction of life and property. A shadow of the terror inspired by the *Bargis*, as the Marāthās were called, still lingers, for the name is used by Bengali mothers to frighten their children to quietness.

The successor of Alī Vardi Khān, the hot-headed young Sirāj-ud-daulā, declared war against the English, the quarrel ending in his capture of Fort William and the massacre of the Black Hole. In January 1757 Colonel Clive and Admiral Watson, having come up from Madras with a considerable force and reoccupied Calcutta, sent an expedition against Hooghly, which sacked the town. After an indecisive battle they forced the Nawāb to make a treaty, and next attacked and captured the French fort at Chandernagore. In June of the same year the battle of Plassey made the British supreme in Bengal. After this the district had peace with the exception of one short

* *Sair-ul-Mutākharin*, Vol. I, pp. 394-5.

interlude in 1759, when an English army under Forde met and defeated a Dutch force at Biderrah near Chandernagore.

The secret treaty with Mir Jāfar Khān, accepted by him on June 3rd, 1757, laid down in its twelfth clause that the "Moors" should not fortify the river below Hooghly;* and the actual cession of the district to the British was the result of the secret compact concluded by the Calcutta Council under the Governor, Mr. Vansittart, with Mīr Kāsim Alī Khān, son-in-law of Mīr Jāfar, by which they agreed to put him in executive charge of the Nizāmat. Its fourth and fifth clauses stipulated that the Company should keep up a standing army for the defence of the government and the provinces, and that to keep up the said force the countries of Burdwān, Midnapore, Chittagong, and half the annual produce of lime at Sylhet, should be ceded to the Company in perpetuity.† Though the treaty was signed on the 27th September 1759, the ceded lands did not become subject to the Company till a year later, viz., in September 1760.‡ The Hooghly district, which was then included in *Chaklā* Burdwān, thus passed finally into the hands of the British;‡ though their *de facto* possession was not ratified *de jure* till August 1765, when the Emperor Shāh Alam made a perpetual grant of the *dīwāni* of Bengal, Bihār and Orissa. The Nizāmat, or rather the criminal branch, remained under the Nawāb up to 1772, when Hastings transferred the central authority to Calcutta.

Faujdārs. There is little record of the *Faujdārs* of Hooghly during the last days of the rule of the Nawābs. When Alī Vardi Khān seized the throne, he put his step-brother, Muhammad Yār Khān, in charge of Hooghly port; and it was his deputy, Mīr Muhammad Rezā, who was imprisoned by the Marāthās in 1742. The Marāthā Governor Sib Rāo, appointed in his place, did not stay long, for on the defeat of Bhāskar Pandit he retreated to Bishnupur in October of the same year.§ In February 1757 the well-known Nanda Kumār was Diwān and acted as *Faujdār* of Hooghly. Mr. Watts, through Umichānd, offered him Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 12,000, on condition that he gave no assistance to the French—a condition fulfilled by him—and later on dangled before him the prospect of being confirmed permanently as

* S. C. Hill, *Bengal* in 1756-57, Vol. II, p. 184.

† Grose, *Voyages*, Volume II, p. 463.

‡ J. Grant's *View of the Revenues of Bengal*, pp. 474—478. This gives on p. 491, a list of the *parganas* included in Lord Clive's *jāgir*, in which no part of, Hooghly district was included, as suggested in Toynbee's *Sketch*, p. 30.

§ *Riyāzu*, p. 342 and note 1, p. 347.

Faujdār.* Watts apparently could not carry out his promise, and at the critical time of Clive's march to Plassey, Sheikh Amin-Ullah was Governor of Hooghly. Clive threatened to destroy Hooghly, if he was opposed, on which Amin-Ullah tamely submitted.† Muhammad Umar Beg Khān was *Faujdār* in 1759, and was directed by Mīr Jāfar to assist the English against the Dutch.‡ Ten years later the *Faujdār* of Hooghly invested the Dutch fort at Chinsura, both by land and water, for non-payment of custom duties. The blockade lasted ten days and was raised at the intervention of the English Government, on the request of the Dutch Council, which promised to pay the amount due.§

After 1760 there were a number of administrative changes. BRITISH RULE. The Company at first confined themselves to the collection of revenue and left the criminal administration to the native government at Murshidābād. The revenue collections were made by a Superintendent, Mr. Johnstone, who was in charge of Hooghly as well as Burdwān, and then by Supervisors, of whom Mr. Verelst was one in 1765.|| The Chhota Nawāb, Muhammad Rezā Khān, was in charge of the Nizāmat, being represented at Hooghly by a *Faujdār*. In 1772, the Court of Directors notified their intention "to stand forth as Diwān;" and Warren Hastings then swept away the system of dual government. Bengal and Bihār were divided into six *zilās*, each under a Collector, aided by a native officer called Diwān, the Collector combining in himself the powers of Collector, Judge and Magistrate, and also having control over the police. Of the zilās, Calcutta was one and Burdwān, including Hooghly, was another.¶ This system having proved a failure, the administration of civil justice was transferred in 1774 to *Amils*, and the control of the police and criminal work to *Faujdārs*, appointed at Murshidābād by the Nāib Nāzim, Muhammad Rezā Khān, who was placed in charge of the Court of Nizāmat Adālat. For this purpose Bengal was divided into fourteen districts, of which Hooghly was one. In 1780 the system was again changed. In each of the six divisions a separate civil court was set up under a European Judge, who in 1781 was vested with the powers of a

* Hill, *Bengal* in 1756-57, II, 228, 294. 317, 386. Busteed calls him Governor of Hooghly (*Echoes from Old Calcutta*, p. 68), but he was only Diwān.

† Hill, *Bengal* in 1756-57, II, 407-8. He was appointed about 10th May 1757; see Sirāj-ud-daulā's letter to Clive, II, 377-8.

‡ Broome's *History of the Bengal Army*, p. 263.

§ J. T Stavorinus, *Voyages to the East Indies*, Volume I, Chapter V, pp. 115-19.

|| J. Grant, *Views of the Revenues of Bengal*, pp. 474, 479.

¶ *Fifth Report of the Select Committee*, 1812, pp. 4-6, 8-9.

Magistrate, while the establishment of *Faujdārs* and *thānādārs* was abolished.* Khān Jahān Khān was the last *Faujdār* at Hooghly and is said to have been granted a pension of Rs. 250 a month.†

The Hooghly district lay mainly in the Burdwān Collectorate; but the riverain strip from Sātgāon to Uluberiā (besides a small tract round Nayāsarāi), with the Saraswatī as the western limit, formed a separate Collectorate under Hooghly, in combination with Hijilī and Tamluk in Midnapore and all the 24-Parganas except the Bārāsāt subdivision.‡ By a notification, dated the 29th March 1787, a new arrangement followed a reduction of establishment, and the river strip was added to Nadiā.§ Under Regulation XXXVI of 1795, *zilā* Burdwān was divided into two parts, each under a separate officer, the northern division being called Burdwān and the southern division Hooghly, to which the riverain strip was added. The Hon'ble C. A. Bruce was the first Judge-Magistrate.

In 1809 the Judge-Magistrate of Hooghly was placed in charge of the three foreign towns of Chinsura, Chandernagore and Serampore as "Superintendent and Commissioner," and in 1820 we find that the district included a large part of the present Midnapore extending down to the sea and comprising Hijilī and Tamluk and also part of the 24-Parganas with Diamond Harbour and Faltā.‖ The Collectorate of Hooghly was not separated from Burdwān until 1st May 1822,¶ Mr. W. H. Belli being the first Collector. The judgeship was made a separate office in 1826, when Mr. D. C. Smyth became the first Judge. The earliest Magistrate's name traced is that of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Frederick James Halliday, who held this post in 1829 and was subsequently the first Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. In 1859, a few years after his appointment to that high office, the posts of the Magistrate and the Collector were combined.** Under Government Order No. 268, dated the 27th February 1843, the Magisterial charge of Howrah became distinct from that of Hooghly.†† The subdivisions were first established in 1845, one at Dwārhātā (Serampore) and the other at Khirpai (Ārāmbāgh).††

---

* *Fifth Report of the Select Committee* 1812, pp. 4-6, 8-9.

† S. C. Dey, *Hooghly Past and Present*, pp, 62-72.

‡ Rennell's Atlas, Plates I, VII and IX (1778-79).

§ *Selections from the Calcutta Gazettes*, pp. Vol. I, 185-86; Toynbee's *Sketch*, p. 32.

‖ J. C. Price, *Notes on the History of Midnapore* (1876), pp 26-27.

¶ Toynbee's *Sketch*, pp. 30-32.

** Crawford's *Hooghly Medical Gazetteer*, Ch. XIV, pp. 512-4.

†† Toynbee's *Sketch*, pp. 32-33.

ARCHÆOLOGY.

The antiquarian remains in the district are few in number and not of any great age. No early Hindu remains have yet been discovered. How far this loss is due to the ravages of the rivers, and how far to the iconoclastic zeal of the Muhammadans, cannot be determined, but old places like Panduā, Nayāsarāi, Tribenī, Sātgāon, Mandāran and Kotsimul (a village on the border) must have contained temples and monasteries. Among recent remains, not older, however, than 2 or 3 centuries, may be mentioned the Saiva temples at Uttarpārā, Tārakeswar, Tribenī and Khānākul, the Sākta temple of Hanseswarī at Bānsberiā, the temple of Vishnu at the same place (one of the oldest in Bengal dating back to 1679), and the Krishna temples at Māhesh and Ballabhpur in Serampore, at Guptipārā, at Baxā on the Saraswatī, and at Krishnanagar on the Kānā Dwārakeswar. These temples are mostly of the Bengal type of architecture, *i.e.*, a cubical body with arched verandahs, above which rises a curvilinear roof, drawn down at the ends like a Bengali thatch of bamboo.* The Hanseswarī temple at Bānsberiā is an exception, being modelled after the Benares pattern; it was built, in fact, by masons from North India. It is a large temple, cruciform in plan, six storeys in height with 13 cupolas, of which the central one is the highest. Among other remains the series of *ghāts* on the Hooghly river deserve mention. The oldest existing of them is probably that at Tribenī, which is attributed to the last Hindu king of Orissa (1560-68 A.D.)

Hindu remains.

Muhammadan remains.

The oldest Musalmān remains—indeed the oldest authentic remains in the district—are found at Tribenī, Panduā and Sātgāon. The ruins at Tribenī consist of (1) an *āstānā* with two enclosures, one of basalt stone and the other of sandstone containing tombs said to be those of Jāfar Khān and his family; (2) a mosque to the west of it with low basalt pillars supporting the arches and several domes above, built by Jāfar Khān in 1298 A.D. Both appear to have been built from materials obtained from old Hindu temples.† Panduā contains the tomb of the saint Shafi-ud-dīn, opposite which is a tall *minār*, about 120 feet high, in five storeys, with a circular staircase inside; north-west of the *minār* there is a large mosque of brick with long rows of cloisters. The *minār* seems to have been modelled after the celebrated Kutab Minār of Delhi, and to have been used as a tower for calling the faithful to prayer. Sātgāon has very few remains except some old tombs and a mosque of small bricks, of the later Pathān style, erected by Saiyad Jamāl-ud-din. These remains are attributed to the 14th century. There

* For Bengali temples, *see* M. M. Chakravarti, J. A. S. B., 1909, pp. 141-162.

† For mosques, *see* M. M. Chakravarti, J. A. S. B., 1910, pp. 23-38.

are also traces of old Muhammadan forts at Panduā, Sātgāon, Hooghly and Mandāran.

Christian monuments. Hooghly is one of the very few districts in Bengal containing Christian buildings of any age. The oldest are the Augustinian Church at Bāndel (rebuilt in 1660) and the Armenian Church of St. John the Baptist in Chinsura (completed in 1697). Other old churches are the Roman Catholic Chapel (1740) and the Dutch octagonal church at Chinsura (1744), the Roman Catholic Chapel at Serampore (rebuilt after 1776), and the Danish Church at the same place which was completed in 1805. Among other old public buildings may be mentioned the Hooghly and Serampore Colleges, the barracks and Dutch Governor's house at Chinsura, and the ruins of the magnificent house of the French Governor at Ghiretti.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS.

EARLY EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS.

THE Portuguese were the first European nation to establish settlements in Bengal, but they were not the first Eupopean travellers in the country. More than half a century before Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and arrived at Calicut on the south-western coast of India (1498), an Italian nobleman, Nicolo Conti, had visited Bengal, where he saw the towns of Cernove and Marazia,* returning to Venice in 1444 after an absence of 25 years. Another Italian, Ludovico Di Varthema, also travelled in Bengal about 1505.† Both these pioneers have left descriptions of the country and its products. Nicolo Conti entered the mouth of the river Ganges, and sailing up it, came at the end of fifteen days to a large city called Cernove (*Cernouem* in text). "This river," he said, "is so large that, being in the middle of it you cannot see land on either side." He asserts, indeed, that in some places it is 15 miles in width. "On the banks of this river there grow reeds exteremely high and of such surprising thickness, that one man alone cannot encompass them with his arms; they make of these fishing boats, for which purpose one alone is sufficient, and of the wood or bark, which is more than a palm's breadth in thickness, skiffs adapted to the navigation of the rivers. The distance between the knots is about the height of a man. Crocodiles and various kinds of fishes unknown to us are found in the river. On both banks of the stream there are most charming villas and plantations and gardens, wherein grow vast varieties of fruits, and, above all, those called *Musa*, which are more sweet than honey, resembling figs, and also the nuts which we call the nuts of India.‡

* Text in Ramusio, *Delle Navigationi et Viaggi*, 1563, Venetia, Vol. II, translation by J. W. Jones.

† Text in Ramusio, Vol. II, translation by J. W. Jones, 1863. Varthema left Europe about 1502, and printed his work in 1510.

‡ Text, Ramusio, II, page 339, translation pp. 9-10. The plants referred to are bamboos, plantains and cocoanuts.

"Having departed thence, he sailed up the river Ganges for the space of three months, leaving behind him four very famous cities and landed at an extremely powerful city called Marazia, where there is a great abundance of aloe wood, gold, silver, precious stones and pearls. From thence he took the route towards some mountains situated towards the east, for the purpose of procuring those precious stones called carbuncles, which are found there. Having spent thirteen days on this expedition, he returned to the city of Cernove, and thence proceeded to Buffetania. Departing thence, he arrived, at the end of a month's voyage, at the mouth of the river Racha [Arakan]".

Ludovico Di Varthema describes his travels as follows:— "We took the route towards the city of Banghella (Text, *Banghalla*, *Bānglā*?), which is distant from Tarnassari (Teasserim) seven hundred miles, at which we arrived in eleven days by sea. The city was one of the best that I had hitherto seen, and has a very great realm. The Sultan of this place is a Moor and maintains two hundred thousand men for battle on foot and on horse; and they are all Muhammadans; and he is constantly at war with the king of Narsingha. This country abounds more in grain, flesh of every kind, in great quantity of sugar, also of ginger, and of great abundance of cotton, than any country in the world. And here there are the richest merchants I ever met with Fifty ships are laden every year in this place with cotton and silk stuffs, which stuffs are these, that is to say, *bairam*, *namone*, *lizati*, *ciantar*, *doazar* and *sinobaff*.* These same stuffs go through all Turkey, through Syria, through Arabia Felix, through Ethiopia, and through all India. There are also here very great merchants in jewels, which come from other countries.

"We also found some Christian merchants here (Armenians)". ..."But before our departure from Banghella, we sold all the rest of the merchandise, with the exception of the corals, the saffron, and two pieces of rose-coloured cloth of Florence. We left this city, which I believe is the best in the world, that is, for living in. In which city the kinds of stuffs you have heard of before are not woven by women, but the men weave them. We departed thence with the said Christians, and went towards a city which is called Pegu, distant from Banghella about a thousand miles."†

Both Nicolo Conti and Ludovico Di Varthema appear to have sailed up the Padmā or easterly branch of the Ganges, and not up the Hooghly. Banghella was either Chittagong or Sonārgāon,

---

* Variants, *Bairami*, *Namone*, *Lizari*, *Ciantari*, *Doazar* and *Sinabaffi*.

† Text, Ramusio, II, pp. 165-66, translation, pp. 210-12, 214, Bk. III. Chs. XIII and XIV.

while Cernove is identified with Shahr-i-Nau, *i.e.*, the new city, a mint town named on the coins of Ilyās Shāh and shown in Gastaldi's map (1561) a little to the north-east of Gaur. It is probably another name for Pānduā.* The Moorish Sultan of Varthema was the powerful king of Bengal, Husain Shāh, and the "king of Narsingha" was his opponent, Pratāparudra Gajapati of Orissa, who was then in possession of part of the territory of Viziānagara.

The first Portuguese to visit Bengal was Joao da Silveira, who was despatched to the Maldives from Goa in 1517, seven years after that place had been captured and made his capital by Affonso de Albuquerque. After obtaining permission to build a fort and capturing two richly laden ships of Cambay, he proceeded to Chittagong in 1518. Here he was joined by Joao Coelho, who had been sent by Fernando Perez de Andrade as an envoy to the King of Arakan (called the King of Bengal by Sousa), who then held Chittagong. Silveira failed, however, in his mission, for a young Bengali on board his boat told of his capture of the two Indian vessels. He was denounced as a pirate and sailed away discomfited.† The next Portuguese to reach the shores of Bengal was one Martin Affonso de Mello Jusarte, who in 1528 was sent on a voyage to the Far East. He was even more unfortunate than his predecessor, for in crossing the Bay of Bengal his ship was wrecked. De Mello, with some companions, escaped and made his way along the coast to Chakiriā, south of Chittagong, the capital of a petty governor named Khudā Baksh Khān. Khudā Baksh imprisoned the ship-wrecked mariners, but promised to release them if they would fight his enemies. The Portuguese did so, but failed to secure their release ; and an attempt to escape resulted in the death of one and the closer confinement of the others. Eventually, through the good offices of a merchant of Chittagong, named Khwāja Shahābuddin (Xabadin of the Portuguese historians), Jusarte was ransomed and arrived at Goa in 1530.‡

THE PORTUGUESE.

Khwāja Shahābuddīn now entered into negotiations with Nuno da Cunha (Viceroy from 1529 to 1538), promising to obtain permission for the King of Portugal to build a fort at Chittagong. Da Cunha at once closed with the offer; and in 1534 De Mello was sent back with five ships to Chittagong, which was then under the Bengal King. The Portuguese had a friendly reception, being

* M. M. Chakravarti, *Notes on the Geography of Old Bengal*, J. A. S. B., May 1908, p. 282.

† F. C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I, p, 340.

‡ R. S. Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, pp. 232-3.

allowed to smuggle in goods, though the custom duties were over 30 per cent. *ad valorem*. De Mello then sent some of his party with presents to Gaur, where Mahmūd Shāh III held his court with such state, that, we are told, 10,000 women attended him. Unfortunately for the success of the mission, among the presents were some cases containing perfumes taken from a Muhammadan vessel, with the names of the owners still attached to them. The angry king not only refused the presents, but sent orders to have the Portuguese seized and their goods confiscated. The Governor of Chittagong invited Affonso and his chief officers to a banquet and took them unawares. Some were killed and some escaped to their ships, while De Mello and the other prisoners were taken to Gaur.

Hearing of their capture, the Viceroy Nuno da Cunha sent Antonio da Silva Menezes to rescue them with 350 men in nine vessels. From Chittagong Antonio forwarded a letter of the Viceroy with presents to the King at Gaur, but received no reply for a long time. He concluded that his messengers had been made prisoners, and proceeded to burn down Chittagong and other places on the coast. Couto's account, however, says that the king demanded £15,000 as ransom, and that this demand being scouted as exorbitant, Chittagong was fired in revenge. When, in 1537, Sher Shāh revolted and besieged Gaur, the King released the Portuguese prisoners and, aided by them, repelled the attack. At the same time Rabello arrived with three ships to demand the release of the captives. Mahmūd, securing the co-operation of the Portuguese, led them with his army to Teliāgarhi near Colgong, where he was defeated by the forces of Sher Shāh. Pleased with their prowess, Mahmūd applied to the Viceroy of Goa for further aid, and this was given ; but when Perez de Sampayo came with nine vessels, he found Gaur in the hands of Sher Shāh and Mahmūd dead.*

According to Correa, Rabello visited Sātgāon in 1535 while on this mission. His account gives an insight into the audacity characteristic of the Portuguese. "In this year", he writes, "Diogo Rabello, finishing his term of service as Captain and Factor of the Choromandel fishery, with license from the Governor, went to Bengal in a vessel of his. . and he went well armed along with two foists, which he equipped with his own money, the Governor only lending him artillery and nothing more. . So

* Blochmann, J. A. S. B., 1873, pp. 298-9 ; Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, pp. 233-4 ; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I, pp. 422-3 ; Stevens, *The Portuguese in Asia*, 1695, Ch. IX, pp. 418-20.

this Diogo Rabello arrived at the Port of Satigan, where he found two great ships of Cambaya, which three days before had arrived with great quantity of merchandise, selling and buying: and these, without touching them, he caused to quit the port and go down the river, forbidding them to carry on any trade, and he also sent one of the foists, with 30 men, to the other port of Chatigan, where they found three ships from the coast of Choromandel, which were also driven away from the port. And Diogo Rabello sent word to the Gozil that he was sent by the Governor with choice of peace or war, and that he should send to ask the King if he chose to liberate the (Portuguese) prisoners, in which case he also would liberate his ports and leave them in their former peace."* This appears to have been the first visit of the Portuguese to the Hooghly district.

In spite of their first reverses, the Portuguese, daring pirates and adventurous traders, pressed on in their attempts to secure the trade of Bengal, and by the end of the 16th century the Bay swarmed with their galleys. Their chief posts in Bengal were *Chatigan* (Chittagong) on the Bay, and *Satigan* (Sâtgāon) on the river Hooghly, called, respectively, Porto Grande and Porto Piqueno, *i. e*, the great haven and the little haven. In the Hooghly river their large ships came up to Bator (in the modern city of Howrah), while smaller ships went up to Sātgâon bringing "rice, cloth of Bombast of diverse sortes, lacca, great abundance of sugar, Mirabolans dried and preserved, long pepper, oyle of Zerzeline, and many other sorts of merchandise." † In the port of Sātgāon 30 or 35 ships were laden every year, and most of them were Portuguese ; while Federici (who left Italy in 1563 and returned home in 1581) found no less than 18 Portuguese ships at Chittagong. "From the great port of Chatigan", he wrote, "they carry for the Indies great store of rice, very great quantities of bombast cloth of every sort, sugar, corn, and money with other merchandise."

Federici's account makes it clear that along the Hooghly the traders got their goods at the temporary markets called *hāts*. "Every year at Buttor they make and unmake a village with houses and shops made of straw, and with all things necessary to their uses, and this village standeth as long as the ships ride there, and till they depart for the Indies, and when they are departed, every man goeth to his plot of houses, and there setteth fire on them, which thing made me to marvel. For as I passed

---

* Quoted under "Satigam" in Hobson-Jobson.

† C. Federici, Purchas, V, 411, 439

up to Satagan, I saw this village standing with a great number of people, with an infinite number of ships and bazars, and at my return coming down with my Captain of the last ship, for whom I tarried, I was all amazed to see such a place so soon raised and burnt, and nothing left but the sign of the burnt houses. The small ships go to Satagan, and there they lade. . The city of Satagan is a reasonable fair city for a city of the Moors, abounding with all things, and was governed by the King of Patane, and now is subject to the great Mogul. I was in this kingdom four months, whereas many merchants did buy or freight boats for their benefits, and with these barks they go up and down the river Ganges to fairs, buying their commodity with a great advantage, because that every day in the week they have a fair now in one place, and now in another."

The necessity of supplementing this method of trade by having a permanent entrepot led to the Portuguese making a settlement at Hooghly. This village is mentioned in a Bengali poem, dated 1495,* and apparently marked the southernmost end of the port of Sātgāon. The river, which had been silting up before Sātgāon, was fairly deep here, and therefore better suited to the larger vessels of the Portuguese. It is commonly believed that the Portuguese settled at Hooghly about or after 1575 with the permission of the Emperor Akbar; but of this there is no authentic proof. They could not have settled here before 1550 because the great Portuguese history *Da Asia* (Vols. I to III published in 1552-63) makes no mention of it, and its map does not show the place. On the other hand, it must have been founded before 1580, in which year Mirzā Najat Khān, Akbar's *Faujdār* at Sātgāon, being defeated by Katlu Lohāni of Orissa, fled to the Portuguese Governor of Hooghly.† Furthermore, if reliance is to be placed in the *Bādshāhnāmā* of Abdul Hamīd Lāhorī (who died in 1654), the settlement took place during the rule of the Bengalis, *i.e.*, before the Mughal conquest. As the river bank from Tribenī southwards was in the possession of the Oriyā king from 1560 to 1567, the statement of the Muhammadan chronicler narrows down the time of the settlement to between 1568 and 1575, and very probably to the reign of Sulaimān Kararāni (1568-73). From the fact that Federici does not refer to Hooghly but only Sātgāon, it would appear that the village was not then of sufficient importance to be mentioned separately from Sātgāon, of which it evidently formed a part at the outset.

---

* J. A. S. B. Proc., 1892, p. 183.

† *Akbarnama*, l. c. Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akbari*, I. p. 440.

The *Bādshānāmā* describes the origin and development of the town as follows*—"Under the rule of the Bengalis (*dar' ahd-i-Bangāliyān*), a party of Frank merchants, who are (*sic* were) inhabitants of Sandip, came trading to Sātgāon. One *kos* above (*sic* below) that place, they occupied some ground on the bank of the estuary. Under the pretence that a building was necessary for their transactions in buying and selling, they erected several houses in the Bengali style. In course of time, through the ignorance or negligence of the rulers of Bengal, these Europeans increased in number, and erected large substantial buildings, which they fortified with cannons, muskets, and other implements of war. In due course a considerable place grew up, which was known by the name of the port of Hooghly. On one side of it was the river, and on the other three sides was a ditch filled from the river. European ships used to go up to the port, and a trade was established there. The markets of Sātgāon declined and lost their prosperity. The villages and the district of Hooghly were on both sides of the river, and these the Europeans got possession of at a low rent."

This description is corroborated by some contemporaneous references. The *Akbarnāmā* says that in 1578 an European named Partāb Bār, a chief merchant of the Bengal ports, came with his wife to the Emperor's court bearing tribute from Bengal. He was graciously received, his sound sense and upright conduct winning the favour and esteem of the Emperor.† This evidently was the Portuguese Governor of Hooghly, to whom Mirzā Najat fled for protection in 1580. About 1588 Ralph Fitch found Hooghly in the sole possession of the Portuguese, and the name Porto Piqueno transferred to it. He refers to it as 'Hugeli, which is the place where the Portugals keep in the country of Bangala, which standeth a league from Satagan; they call it Porto Piqueno." "Satagam," he adds, "is a faire citie for a citie of the Moores and very plentiful of all things '‡ Hooghly had supplanted Sātgāon by the time the *Ain-i-Akbarī* was compiled (1596-97), for it states that in the *sarkār* of Sātgāon there were two ports at the distance of half a *kos* from each other, i.e., Sātgāon and Hooghly. The latter was the more important, and both were in the possession of the Europeans (*Firinghīs*, *i.e.*, the Portuguese).§ In 1599 the number and influence of the Christians were attested by the erection of the

* Elliot, VII, pp. 31-32; *cf.* Vol. VII, p. 211, for Khāfi Khān's account (mainly based on the *Bādshāhnāmā*.)

† *Akbarnāma*, Elliot, VI, p. 59.

‡ J. H. Ryley, *Ralph Fitch*, p. 113; *cf.* Linschoten, translation, I. pp. 90-91.

§ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Jarrett, Vol. II, p. 125.

Bandel Church;* while in 1603, Hooghly, under the name of Golin, is described as a Portuguese Colony, and it is said that a Portuguese named Cervalius captured the Mughal fort with a garrison of 400 men, all but one of whom were killed †

By this time the Portuguese in Bengal had degenerated into a race of pirates and slave-dealers. Both European and Indian writers agree as to their lawlessness. Van Linschoten, for instance, writing in 1595, describes them as living 'like wild men and untamed horses. Every man doth what he will, and every man is lord and master.' Purchas again wrote in 1610:—"The Portuguese have here Porto Grande a d Porto Pequeno (Hooghly), but without forts and government; every man living after his own lust, and for the most part they are such as dare not stay in those places of better government for some wickedness by them committed."

The Hooghly merchants were apparently in league with the pirates, both Portuguese and Arakanese, whose galleys swept the sea-board and penetrating far inland carried off the villagers to the slave markets. "Even the Portuguese of 'Ogouli,'" writes Bernier, "purchased without scruple these wretched captives, and the horrid traffic was transacted in the vicinity of the island of Galles near Cape das Palmas.‡ The pirates, by a mutual understanding, waited for the arrival of the Portuguese, who bought whole cargoes at a cheap rate...... The Portuguese established themselves at 'Ogouli' under the auspices of Jahāngir, the grandfather of Aurangzeb. That prince was free from all prejudice against Christians, and hoped to reap great benefit from their commerce. The new settlers also engaged to keep the Gulf of Bengal clear of pirates. Shāh Jahān, a more rigid Muhammadan than his father, visited the Portuguese at 'Ogouli' with a terrible punishment. They provoked his displeasure by the encouragement afforded to the depredators of 'Rakan,' and by their refusal to release the numerous slaves in their service, who had all of them been subjects of the Mughal."§

Other writers assign different reasons for the attack on Hooghly. According to the Portuguese, they incurred the displeasure of

---

* Both Hamīd Lāhorī and Khāfi Khān speak of a *Kalisā*, or church of the Portuguese, in Hooghly, Elliot, VII, pp. 34, 211. *Kalisā* is perhaps a corruption of *ecclesia*.

† Toynbee's *Sketch of the Administration of the Hooghly District*, p. 4. The authority for this statement is not given.

‡ Now called Palmyras Point, a well known headland on the Orissa coast.

§ As early as 1518 a Portuguese report stated that a slave in Bengal was valued at 14 shillings and a young woman of good appearance at about as much again. W. W. Hunter, *History of British India*, Vol. I, p. 161.

Shāh Jahān, firstly, because in 1621, when he was in rebellion against his father, Michael Rodriguez, the Governor of Hooghly, declined to assist him with some cannon and a detachment of Europeans,* and secondly, because the Emperor ascribed the reverses of the imperial troops in several engagements with Adil Khān of Bijāpur to help received from the Portuguese.† The Muhammadan histories say that the Portuguese, partly by force, but even more by means of doles, converted people to Christianity, that they seized and carried off peaceful cultivators, harassed travellers and traders, were irregular in the payment of revenue, etc.

Whatever may have been the cause, Shāh Jahān, in appointing Kāsim Khān to the government of Bengal, charged him to extirpate the Portuguese colony.‡ His orders were promptly obeyed. The attack was made from the river and by land an outpost outside the moat was captured, and four thousand boatmen serving the Portuguese were forced to join the imperial army. The siege lasted 3½ months, the Portuguese fighting valiantly in the hope of being succoured from Goa. At length a part of the wall was blown up by a mine, and the imperial army captured the place. A number of the besieged made their way to the ships, but many were killed in the attempt One large ship was blown up to prevent its capture ; and out of 64 Portuguese ships and 257 smaller craft, only three of the latter escaped. According to the Muhammadan historians, 10,000 of the enemy were killed, and 4,400 (1,400 according to Khāfi Khān) were taken prisoners, while 1,000 of the imperial army fell in the course of the siege.§ The Portuguese accounts say, however, that the garrison consisted of only 200 Portuguese and 600 slaves, that the siege lasted from the 21st June to 29th September, and that the few who escaped fortified themselves on an island in front of Hooghly and were eventually rescued by an expedition sent by the Portuguese Viceroy.** The date of the capture of the town is taken in this account to be October 1631, but others make it September 1632. The number given in the Portuguese accounts is too small, for Father Francis Corsi, S. J., in a letter from Agra, dated October 5,

---

* Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 143.

† F. C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, II, p. 247.

‡ *Bādshāhnāmā* of Abdul Hamīd Lāhorī, *Muntakhabul-lubab* of Khāfi Khān, *Maasir-ul-Umara*, *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*.

§ The *Bādshāhnāmā* of Abdul Hamīd Lāhorī, Elliot VII, p. 35 ; Stewart's *History of Bengal*, pp. 152-5.

** F. C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. II. pp. 247-48. According to the *Bādshāhnāmā*, the siege of Hooghly lasted from 11th June to 10th September 1632.

1633, announced the arrival of 4,000 persons at Agra from Hooghly in July 1633.*

Historians agree as to the wretched fate of the prisoners whom Shāh Jahān had carried off as slaves to Agra. There the women were distributed among the harems, the children were circumcised, the men were persuaded to embrace Islām or forced to do so by the daily threat of throwing them under the feet of elephants. Some of the monks, however, remained faithful to their creed, and were conveyed to Goa and other Portuguese settlements by the exertions of the Jesuit missionaries at Agra. These faithful monks were apparently Augustinians, to whom the evangelization of Bengal had been entrusted.

According to an account by Dr. Wise, the return of the Portuguese was due to a miracle. One of the priests, the Revd. Father John Da Cruz, was sentenced to be torn to death by an elephant; but the animal, instead of destroying him, prostrated itself before him and 'caressed' him with its trunk. The Emperor then ordered that the priest should be let out of the arena, and promised him any boon he might ask, on which he asked for his own liberty and permission to conduct the surviving Christians to Bengal. "A *pharmān* was promulgated by beat of drum through all the country, ordering the immediate return of the captives, who were loaded with presents and sent back to their former residence. The Portuguese, thus received into favour, obtained a charter (*sanad*) signed by the Emperor, by which he allowed them to return to Hooghly and to build a town to the north of the former fort, still known by the Europeans as Bandel, and by the natives as Balāghar (strong house). The land thus assigned (777 *bighās*) was given free of rent, and the friars were declared exempted from the authority of the *subahdārs*, *faujdārs* and other officers of state. They were even allowed to exercise magisterial power over Christians, but not in matters of life and death. At the same time the Emperor ordered all his officers and subjects in Bengal to assist the brave Portuguese. The Christians returned to Bengal in 1633."† Toynbee also says that Da Cruz succeeded in inducing Shah Jahān to permit the Christian prisoners to be taken back to Bengal, and that the Emperor in 1646 granted 777 acres of rent-free land to Bandel Church, which was rebuilt by Mr. Solto in 1660.

---

* J. A. S. B., August 1910, pp. 458, note 2, 531.

† The above account is given in the *Bengal Catholic Herald* of 21st May 1842, and was taken from a Statistical Account of Hooghly prepared by Dr. Wise, who based it on 'Ms. Records,' without, however, stating their origin and nature.

Recent researches, however, show that there is no proof that Da Cruz was taken to Agra, but that he was wounded during the siege, recovered from his wounds in a village near Hooghly, and was eventually recalled to Goa, where he died *

On the other hand, the return of the Portuguese in 1633 is confirmed from other sources. John Poule, writing on the chances of the English establishing trade in Bengal, distinctly says in a letter dated 17th July 1633, *i.e.*, ten months after the capture of Hooghly, that the Portuguese who had been expelled from Hooghly had found great favour with Shāh Jahān and re-entered that place to the number of 20 persons, and that the King had bestowed on them their capital, 'so that our expectation of Hugly is frustrayt.'† Not all the captives were released; many lingered in prison, "some were ransomed, others fled to Goa, or back to Bengal, where they joined the remnants of the defenders of Hooghly."‡ Father Antonio da Cristo, the Prior of Hooghly, was still in prison in 1640, when Father Manrique, an Augustinian, visited Agra and Lahore, the object of his mission being the release of the Hooghly prisoners. At Lahore he succeeded in obtaining the liberation of the prior and the restoration of some places of worship.§

Though readmitted to Hooghly, the Portuguese had sustained a crushing blow and ceased to have political influence in Bengal and to predominate in commerce. In the first twenty years of the 17th century the trade in Bengal had been practically monopolised by them, as was pointed out by the English factors of Surat in a letter dated 26th February 1616, stating that there was not now fit shipping for the discovery of Porto Pequenia (Hooghly), nor was it a fit place for English trade, part of the river Ganges being commanded by the Portuguese. It was stated, moreover, next year, that in Bengal there were no ports for small shipping but such as the Portuguese possessed.‖ A few years later (in 1620) Hughes and Parker wrote as follows from Patna, where they were sent from Surat in order to found a factory:—"The Portuguese, of late years, have had a trade here in Patna, coming up with their frigates from the bottom of Bengal, where they have two ports, the one called

---

* The Revd. H. Hosten, Frey Joao Da Cruz, J. A. S. B., March 1911.

† W. Hedges' Diary, III, 177; l. c. also in the *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*. Vol. I.

‡ H. G. Keene, *Sketch of the History of Hindustan*, pp. 198-99. The authority quoted is a work of Manrique published at Rome in 1653. See also J. A. S. B., 1910, pp. 282-3.

§ *Original collections* 450, 458, l. c., *Diary II*, 171, 172.

Gollye, the other Pieppullye, and therein are licensed by this King to inhabit. Gollye is their chiefest port, where they are in great multitudes, and have their yearly shipping both from Malacca and Cochin. The commodities they usually bring up hither is for the most part tin, spices, and China wares, in lieu whereof they transport amberty, callicoes, carpets, and all sorts of their cloth. which they die into redds purposely for sail to the southwards. This city stands up on the Ganges, whose swift current transports their frigates with such dexterity that in five or six days they usually go up to their ports, but in repairing up again spend thrice the time."*

By 1644, however, we find Bocarro, after enumerating the number of ships and the rich merchandize that used to come to Cochin from Ugolim (Hooghly) and Porto Grande (Chittagong), complaining that 'since these two possessions were lost and the two ports closed, there go barely one or two vessels to Orissa.' The trade of the Portuguese also suffered from the competition of the Dutch, and, in the second half of the century, of the English. Still it was not entirely lost, for Portuguese vessels are frequently mentioned in the English correspondence, and as late as 1679 Thomas Bowrey remarked :—" Many both great and small ships, both English, Dutch and Portugals, doe annually resort to lade and transport sundry commodities hence "†, *i.e.*, from Bengal. In the first half of the 18th century, the French, the Danes and the Prussians also entered the field ; and in the struggle the Portuguese succumbed.

In spite of the destruction of their power at Hooghly, the place appears still to have been occupied by a large number of Portuguese, partly because they were attracted there by trade and the cheapness of living,‡ and partly because they were forced to remain by the loss of their other stations. Tavernier wrote in 1676—"In a word, Bengale is a country abounding in all things; and 'tis for this very reason that so many Portuguese, Mesticks,§ and other Christians are fled thither from those quarters which the Dutch have taken from them." "The Jesuits and Augustinians that have great churches there, wherein they exercise their religion with all freedom, did assure me that in Ogouli alone there were no less than eight or nine thousand souls of Christians." Bernier

---

* W. Foster, *The English Factories in India (1618-1621)* 1908. Gollye is a corruption of Ogouli (Hooghly.)

† *The Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, p. 133.

‡ *Cf.* Bernier: "Pigs are obtained at so low a price that the Portuguese settled in the country live almost entirely upon pork."

§ Mestico is a term still in use in the Philippines for a half-breed.

also gives the same account,* and several other writers of the period refer to the large number of Portuguese resident in Hooghly.† Most of them were poor, but industrious. Thomas Bowrey (1669-79) described some of their main occupations as follows:—"They knitt stockings of silke and cotton; they make bread for the English and Dutch Factories and particular dwellinge houses, and for theire ships and vessels;‡ they make many sorts of sweetmeats, viz., Mangoe, Orange, Lemon, Ginger, Mirabolins, Ringo Roots, etc., several sorts of Achar pickles) as Mangoe, Bamboo, Lemon, etc. very good and cheape. Many of the Men Use the Sea in English or Moors ships and vessels, soe that these people live very happily, better than in most places in Asia, all sorts of provisions beinge here very cheape." A number served the Mughals as soldiers, as Walter Clavell pointed out:—"The Portuguese, though numerous in Hugly, yett are reduced to a very low and meane condition, their trade not worth mentioning, their subsistance being to be entertained in the Mogull's pay as souldiers "§ They also served under the English, chiefly in the Deccan, and several were artillerymen in the army of Siràj-ud-daulā.‖ Gradually the Portuguese of Hooghly migrated to other European settlements, especially Calcutta Orme noticed that more than two thousand Portuguese, men, women and children, crowded into Fort William when besieged by Sirāj-ud daulā's army, and a body of them helped the English in their defence.¶ A number were still left in Hooghly, however, for we find that when Sirāj-ud-daulā marched there after the massacre of the Black Hole, he levied a fine of Rs. 5,000 from the Portuguese of the place.**

It remains to note that the Portuguese language for some time survived the extinction of the Portuguese power. It was the *lingua franca* of European settlements round the Bay of Bengal, and was the ordinary medium of communication between Europeans and their domestics, while Persian was the language of

* *Travels in the Mughul Empire*, 1656-58, pp. 438-39, quoted in ch. II, pp. 31-2.

† Bowrey, p. 191; Clavell's, l.c., *Diary of William Hedges*, II, 240; John Marshall, Notes and Observations, p. 6, l.c., Bowrey, p. 191, Note 1.

‡ Bernier tells us that in Bengal excellent and cheap sea biscuits were made for the crews of European ships.

§ *Accompt of the Trade of Hugly*, at the end of the *Diary* of Streynsham Master, p. 322, l.c. Hedges' *Diary*, II, p. 240.

‖ S. C. Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, Vol. I, pp. 135, 140, 147.

¶ Orme's *History*, II, pp. 59, 61; Hill's *Bengal in 1756-57*, Vol. I, pp. 91, 102, 129, 144, 157, II, pp. 142, 190. Later, many were employed in Calcutta as writers: *cf*. Stavorinus I, pp. 521-2; *Sāir-ul-Mutākharin*, IV, p 121.

** Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, Vol. I, p. civ.

intercourse with the native courts. The charter granted to the East India Company in 1698 contained a provision that the minister, who was to be maintained at each station, should learn Portuguese within twelve months; and Kiernander, the first Protestant missionary in Bengal, preached in that language as more familiar to him than English. Even as late as 1828 the Governor of Serampore received the daily report of his little garrison of thirty sepoys from the commandant, a native of Oudh, in Portuguese.*

THE DUTCH.

The next European nation to settle in Bengal were the Dutch. Travellers and individual traders of that nation had visited Bengal before the 17th century, *e.g.*, Van Linschoten, who passed through the country before 1589; but the earliest record of the arrival of Dutch ships in the north of the Bay was in 1615. In that year, we are told, a Portuguese fleet having sailed up the river of Arakan, the Rājā induced the masters of some Dutch vessels then in the harbour to assist him in attacking the enemy.† These Dutch ships probably belonged to the "United East Indian Company of the Netherlands" founded in 1602. It is not certain when the Dutch first settled in Bengal Orme vaguely says that the Dutch settled in Bengal about the year 1625,‡ while Thomas Bowrey (1679) ascribes both the Dutch and the English factories at Hooghly to "much about the time of the horrid massacre of the English at Amboyna" (1623).§ These assertions, however, are not corroborated by contemporaneous records, and Yule has fairly proved that the factory of the English at Hooghly could not have been started before 1651.‖ In the earliest reference to Dutch trade in the English factory records (dated 25th October 1634) no settlement of theirs is mentioned. It merely states that "spices of all sorts sells there to good profitt, but the Dutch freemen from Battavia and Portugalls from Macassar did so stuffe the Markets therewith last yeare, as now theres little or (none) required. Hereafter the Dutch Company (we believe) will doe the like, so we see not any great hope of gains by that commodity. Hitherto have we only shewed you what commodities Bengala does chiefly export and require......The Dutch are never without 3 or 4 such vessells here, wherewith they trade from Port to Port all the yeare longe, sometimes buying Rice and other Provisions where they are Cheape and transport to Better Marketts, otherwhiles

* J. C. Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward* (1859), Vol. I, pp. 21, 22-38.

† Stewart's *History of Bengal*, pp. 138-9.

‡ *History of Hindostan*, II, p. 8.

§ *Countries round the Bay of Bengal*, p. 170.

‖ Hedges' *Diary* III, pp. 184-7, 194.

they are imployed as men of warr (but never Idle), and by these meanes they cleare at yeares end all the great charges they are att uppon this coast."*

It is clear, however, that the Dutch had some settlement in Bengal before 1650, for in the instructions to the English factory staff of Balasore and Hooghly, dated the 14th December 1650, they are advised to give orders in silk and sugar "according to the Dutch" and to secure, with the help of Dr. Boughton at Rājmahāl, such a *pharmān*, "as may outstrip the Dutch in point of privilege and freedom, that so they may not have cause any longer to boast of theirs."† As Hooghly was now the imperial port of West Bengal, it is most probable that the Dutch had their chief factory there some time before 1650, when they got a regular *pharmān* from Shāh Jahān. It laid down "that, upon complaints being made by the Dutch, the Governor of Bengal is commanded that no one shall exact more from them than is authorized by ancient custom and shall not introduce any new laws or customs on that head."‡

The first Dutch factory adjoined the old English factory at Hooghly, and was swept away by floods, upon which the Dutch built a new factory lower down at Chinsura. It is said to have been built in 1656,§ and it was certainly in existence before 1665, when the Dutchman Gautier Schouten visited it and described it thus ||:—"There is nothing in it (Hooghly) more magnificent than the Dutch factory. It was built on a great space at the distance of a musket shot from the Ganges, for fear that, if it were nearer, some inundation of the waters of the river might endanger it, or cause it to fall. It has indeed more the appearance of a large castle than of a factory of merchants. The walls are high and built of stone, and the fortifications are also covered with stone. They are furnished with cannon, and the factory is surrounded by ditches full of water. It is large and spacious. There are many rooms to accommodate the Director, the other officers who compose the Council, and all the people of the Company. There are large shops built of stone, where goods that are bought in the country, and those that our vessels bring there, are placed." Thomas Bowrey did not hesitate to call it "the largest and completest Factorie in

* Hedges' Diary., III, 179.

† Ibid, III, 185.

‡ *Voyages to the East Indies*, J. S. Stavorinus, Translation, S. H. Wilcocke, Vol. III, p. 84. The list of *pharmāns* given therein does not show any of 1638 relating to Bengal as stated in Toynbee's *Sketch*, p. 12.

§ "It was built in the year 1656, as appears by date over the land-gate." Stavorinus, I, 516.

|| *Voyage aux Indes Orientales*, 1658-65, II, 156.

Asia;" Delestre described it as 'a very fine and very rich factory;' and the English Agent, Streynsham Master, as "very large and well built with two quadrangles,"* The common belief that it was fortified during the rebellion of Subhā Singh in 1696† seems therefore to be without foundation, unless it refers to repairs and a further strengthening of the defences.

An interesting account of the settlement is also given by Tavernier, who visited it on 20th February 1666. "I arrived at Hughli, where I stayed till the 2nd of March, during which time the Hollanders bid me very welcome, and made it their business to show me all the divertidements which the country was capable to afford. We went several times in pleasure-boats upon the river, and we had a banquet of all the delicacies that the gardens of Europe could have afforded us; salads of all sorts, colewarts, asparagus, pease; but our chiefest dish was Japan beans, the Hollanders being very curious to have all sorts of pulse and herbs in their gardens, though they could never get artichokes to grow in that country "

During the reign of Aurangzeb the Dutch trade in Bengal was regulated by a *pharmān* granted by that Emperor in 1662, the first three articles of which provided :—(1) that the Dutch arriving with their ships before *Hougly*, *Pipley* and *Ballasore*, shall have liberty to anchor in such places as they may choose; (2) that after payment of the fixed duty of two and a-half per cent. upon their goods, they may convey them to such places as they please; sell them to whatever merchants they chose; purchase again goods from the same in the manner they may like best, and employ brokers in their business, according to their own choice, without that any one shall be permitted to intrude himself into their service, contrary to their liking; (3) that with respect to the piece-goods, saltpetre, sugar, silk, wax and other articles for which they trade in the places situated in the provinces of *Bahar*, *Bengal* and *Orixa*, and which they convey for exportation to the ports of *Hougly*, *Pipley* and *Ballasore*, they shall not in any wise be molested.‡ The goods specified in the last article may be compared with some of those mentioned by Clavell as being carried home by the Dutch, viz., rice, oil, butter, hemp, cordage, sail cloth, raw silk, wrought

---

* *Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, p. 169 and Note 1; *Voyage fait aux Indes Orientales*, 1677, p. 188; *Diary of S. Master*, under date 21st November 1676, p. 263.

† Orme, *History of Hindostan*, II, 16. The northern gate bore the date 1687, and the southern gate 1692, according to an article in the *Calcutta Review*, 1845, p. 512.

‡ J. S. Stavorinus, III, pp. 89-91.

silk, saltpetre, opium, sugar, long pepper and beeswax.* Tavernier and Bernier were amazed at the vast quantity of cotton cloths of all sorts which they exported.

Besides Fort Gustavus at Chinsura and a silk factory at Cossimbazar, the Dutch had, on the Hooghly river, a garden just south of Chandernagore, a factory for salting pork at Barānagar, north of Calcutta, and, later, a station at Faltā for seagoing ships. Their settlements and trade were generally under a Director aided by a Council, though occasionally an officer was deputed direct from Holland and was independent of the Director, who was himself subordinate to Bataviā.† According to Alexander Hamilton, the factory of Chinsura in the beginning of the 18th century was a large building with high walls of brick. "The factors have a great many good houses standing pleasantly on the river's side; and all of them have pretty gardens to their houses. The settlement at Chinsura is wholly under the Dutch Company's Government. It is about a mile long, and about the same breadth, well inhabited by Armenians and the natives. It is contiguous to Hughly, and affords sanctuary for many poor natives, when they are in danger of being oppressed by the Moghul's Governor or his harpies."

The correspondence at this time discloses considerable jealousy between the rival European settlements, and no little friction with the Muhammadan subordinates in Bengal, who frequently interfered with the passage of the saltpetre and sugar boats and with the silk and cotton weavers.‡ The Dutch, who were eminently a nation of merchants, rarely took part in the political dissensions of Bengal, but on a few occasions they were forced to give up this policy of non-intervention. For instance, in August 1684 a Dutch squadron of four ships arrived at Barānagar from Batavia, evidently to enforce their demands on the local government; and their sugar and saltpetre boats were allowed to go down without hindrance in November of that year.§ A little later they had a fresh quarrel with the Mughal government of Bengal and withdrew from their factories; but on war breaking out with the English in 1686, they were again put in possession of Barānagar and their bazar, and made a considerable profit in trade.|| During the rebellion of Subhā Singh, when the rebel army occupied Hooghly in 1696, the

* Hedges' *Diary*, II, 240.

† Hedges' *Diary*, I, 124, 130, 161; *cf.* 154.

‡ Hedges' *Diary*, I, 117, 121, 164, II, 117; Thomas Bowrey, pp. 161-63.

§ Hedges' *Diary*, I, 133, 164.

|| Letter of Job Charnock and the Council to the Court of Directore, dated 24th November 1686, para. 14, Hedges' *Diary*, II, 56.

Dutch drove them out of the town by firing broadsides from two of their ships.* On the death of Shāh Ālam in 1711, the Dutch sent their treasure and womenfolk from Cossimbazar to Hooghly, which they fortified as far as possible, keeping back one of their armed ships for its defence.† In 1712, they tried to mediate between Ziā-ud-dīn Khān, the late *Faujdār* of Hooghly, and his successor who had been appointed by Murshid Kuli Khān, but without success.‡ In 1712 the Emperor granted a fresh *pharmān* to the Dutch East India Company, renewing and confirming the previous grants, charging a duty of 2½ per cent only on the Dutch goods, and ordering that their vessels or authorized servants, provided with passes from the Director in Bengal, should not be molested.§

In the time of Sirāj-ud-daulā the Dutch appear to have been the most favoured European nation, their chief having had, for at least 20 years, the right of precedence at the Nawāb's *darbār* and also the right to buoy the Hooghly, which, they claimed, "argues a kind of mastery over the river and a superiority of interests in matters relating to trade"‖ When he marched on Calcutta in 1756, they helped neither the Nawāb nor the English. Indeed, they were not in a position to do so, for in January 1757 the Council reported that they would not be "able to offer any resistance worth mentioning, for our palisades, that have to serve as a kind of rampart, are as little proof against a cannonade as the canvas of a tent, and our entire military force consists of 78 men, about one-third of whom are in the hospital, whilst all our native servants have run away from fear of the English, so that if matters came to such a pass, we should have to man and aim the guns ourselves ".¶

They gave shelter, however, to the English both at Faltā and Chinsura, and when Sirāj-ud-daulā left Calcutta, were called on to pay a fine of 20 lakhs. Rather than submit to this exorbitant demand, they threatened to leave the country and were eventually let off with the payment of 4½ lakhs.** They subsequently asked for a refund, but the Nawāb "had the audacity to threaten to bastonade us with bamboos (the greatest insult that can be offered to anyone here) if we do not keep quiet; an affront that we should be able to pay out for,

* Stewart's *History*, p. 208. Stewart (p. 207) incorrectly ascribes the fortification of Chinsura to this year.

† Wilson's *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, II, 44, 46.

‡ Wilson's *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, II, 71.

§ Stavorinus, III, 98-100.

‖ Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, Vol. II, pp. 257, 287,

¶ Ditto Vol. I, xxxvi.

** Ditto Vol. I, pp. ciii, civ.

if we could put an army of from 14 to 15,000 men in the field as the English have done, who have now made him so tame that the mere sight of an English flag is sufficient to drive him out of his mind with fear.' *

In 1759 the Dutch abandoned their peaceful rôle. They were anxious to share in the wealth acquired by the English in Bengal, and their intrigues were readily supported by the new Nawāb Jāfar Khān, who, alarmed by the growing power of the English, wished to counterbalance it by that of the Dutch. In August 1759 a Dutch vessel arrived with a number of European and Dutch troops, but the Nawāb, apparently taken by surprise, failed to give them support, and Clive acted promptly, seizing and searching one of their boats. They then withdrew after an exchange of formal remonstrances and formal replies with the Council at Chinsura.

A more serious danger soon threatened. In October 1759 seven Dutch vessels arrived full of troops. The Nawāb had several conferences with the Dutch officials, after which he wrote to Clive that he had granted them certain trade concessions and that they had promised to send away the ships and troops as soon as the weather permitted. News soon came, however, that the Dutch were busily enlisting soldiers and that their fleet was moving up the Hooghly. The situation was critical. The force on board the fleet consisted of 700 European infantry and 800 Malays, while at Chinsura there was a garrison of 150 Europeans, including artillery, and a considerable body of sepoys. "To allow the Dutch troops to land and form a junction with the garrison at Chinsura, was to admit the establishment of a rival and superior force in the province, which, coupled with the conduct of the Nawāb, was to submit to the certain ruin of the English influence and power in Bengal—to prevent this, which could only be done by force, was to commence hostilities with a nation, with which the mother country was at peace."†

Clive resolved on a bold course. He ordered up three Indiamen and a snow, the *Leopard*, then in the river, to protect Calcutta, and reinforced the garrison at Tanna Fort and Charnock's Battery. At this time an additional force under Colonel Forde and Captain Knox opportunely arrived from Masulipatam. The former, though he had been dismissed by the Company, was placed in command of the garrison, and the latter of Tanna Fort and Charnock's Battery. The Dutch sent a remonstrance to Calcutta, recapitulating their grievances, and threatening ven-

* Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, Vol. II, p. 315.

† Broome, *Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army*, p. 265.

geance, if the English searched their vessels, or hindered their ships or troops coming up the river. Clive replied that there was no desire to injure the Dutch trade or privileges, or to insult their colours, but it was impossible to allow their vessels or troops to pass under existing treaties with the Nawāb. He, therefore, referred them to the Mughal authorities, offering his services as a mediator.

His coolness and audacity enraged the Dutch. They seized seven small trading vessels, and landing at Faltā and Raipur, attacked and burnt the English factories, and captured the snow *Leopard*. On 20th November Colonel Forde seized the Dutch factory at Barānagar and crossed the Hooghly, with four field-pieces, to Chandernagore, in order to keep the garrison at Chinsura in check and intercept any Dutch troops which might march there. On the 23rd, the Dutch troops were landed below Sānkrāil, while their vessels dropped down to Melancholy (Mānikhāli) Point. Here, under Clive's orders, Commodore Watson demanded a full apology, restitution of the English property, and withdrawal from the river. The demand was refused, upon which the Commodore attacked them on the 24th November, took all their ships except that of the second in command, who gallantly cut his way through to Kālpi, but was captured there by two British vessels.

On the same day, at Chandernagore, Colonel Forde repulsed a sally of the garrison of Chinsura and drove them back in rout to the town. In the afternoon he was joined by a detachment under Captain Knox, and in the evening he heard that the Dutch force was marching up from the south. Forde at once wrote off to Clive for an official order authorizing him to fight the Dutch, against whom war had not been declared. Clive received it at night whilst playing cards. Without leaving the table, he wrote on the back of the note in pencil, "Dear Forde, fight them immediately. I will send you the order of Council to-morrow."

As soon as he received this, Colonel Forde marched to the plain of Bedarrah, which commanded the direct road to Chinsura and gave his artillery and cavalry full scope. The action was short, bloody and decisive. In half-an-hour the enemy were completely defeated and put to flight, leaving 120 Europeans and 200 Malays dead, 150 Europeans and as many Malays wounded, while Colonel Roussel and 14 other officers, 350 Europeans and 200 Malays were made prisoners. The cavalry completed the rout, and only fourteen of the enemy escaped to Chinsura. The loss of the English was trifling. The Dutch ascribed their defeat to the fatigue of a long march, want of artillery, and the disorder caused in passing a *nullah* in front of the British position.*

* Broome, *Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army*, pp. 262-71. Grose, *Voyage to the East Indies*, II, 376.

After this victory Forde invested Chinsura, and the Dutch sued for peace, being further alarmed by the arrival of the ferocious Mīrān, the Nawāb's son, with six thousand horse. A convention was then signed at Ghiretti, by which the Dutch engaged to pay an indemnity and the English agreed to restore their ships, stores and prisoners, with the exception of such as desired to enter their service. An agreement was next concluded between the Dutch and the Nawāb, by which the former promised to send away all their forces except 125 Europeans, to restore their fortifications to their former condition, and never to allow more than one European ship at a time to come up the river beyond Kālpi, Faltā or Māyāpur without the express sanction of the Nawāb. Thus ended the dream of a Dutch empire in India.

They had at that time territorial property at Barānagar and Chinsura, besides factories at Kalkapur (near Cossimbazar), Patna, Dacca and Balasore.* The Government consisted of a Director and seven Members, who were subordinate to the administration at Batavia, where all vacancies were filled up, the Council of Hooghly only making *ad interim* appointments. Orders and letters were, however, received at Chinsura direct from Holland, where advices were despatched annually. The Director and members were allowed a certain percentage on the sale of imports and opium; besides which they had special opportunities of enriching themselves by investing the large sums lying in their hands.† The goods imported from Batavia were spices and bars of Japan copper; the imports from Holland were cutlery, woollen cloth, silver and other European goods. The exports to Holland were piece-goods, raw silk and saltpetre, and to Java piece-goods, opium and saltpetre, the greater part of the last being re-exported to Holland. Large profits were made on the opium sold in Java, and also on the bullion silver used for coining rupees in Bengal.‡

Their trade naturally enough declined with the loss of their power, but its decline was accelerated by malversation, as is clear from a letter written by the superior authorities at Batavia:—"For a series of years a succession of Directors in Bengal have been guilty of the greatest enormities and the foulest dishonesty; they have looked upon the Company's effects confided to them as a booty thrown open to their depredations; they have most shamefully and arbitrarily falsified the invoice prices; they have violated,

* Grose, *Voyage to the East Indies*, Vol. I, Bk. 3, Ch. VI, p. 512.
† Ditto ditto Vol. I, Ch. V, p. 502, *et seq.*; Vol. III, Appendix pp. 503—4.
‡ Ditto ditto Vol. I, Ch. VII, pp. 524—8; *cf.* p. 355.

in the most disgraceful manner, all our orders and regulations with regard to the purchase of goods, without paying the least attention to their oaths and duty."* Captain (afterwards Admiral) Stavorinus, who came to Chinsura from Batavia in 1769, confirms this impression of vanishing trade and gives an interesting account of the Dutch settlement. The principal houses were one-storeyed and made of brick. Glass windows were unknown, frames of twisted cane taking their place. There was a public garden, but it had neither a bush nor a blade of grass. The Director alone was allowed to ride in a *pālki*. A little way on the road to Chandernagore was a building erected as a freemasons' lodge, called Concordia. The walls of the fort (Fort Gustavus) were in such a ruinous condition, that it would have been dangerous to fire the cannon mounted on them. The weakness of the defences and the poverty of the place were realized in October 1769 while Stavorinus was in Bengal. The Director having failed to pay custom duties for some time, the *Faujdār* of Hooghly sent an agent to collect them. The agent was flogged, and the *Faujdār* then invested Chinsura with 10,000 or 12,000 men. After 13 days the siege was raised on the intervention of the British, but in this short time many had died of starvation.

In 1781, on the outbreak of war with Holland, Chinsura was taken by the British. The Director at that time was Johannes Matthias Ross, a warm friend of Warren Hastings and his wife, who paid him several visits at Chinsura. It was carefully arranged, to save his *amour propre*, that a large force should march on the place and demand its surrender, but by some mistake only a subaltern and 14 men were sent. Offended at this want of courtesy, Ross defied the detachment and refused to surrender to anything less than a regiment of sepoys, which was then sent from Chandernagore. Chinsura was restored to the Dutch in 1783, but was again taken from them in 1795, and administered first by a special Commissioner and then by the Judge-Magistrate of Hooghly. It was again handed back in 1817, but the tenure of the Dutch was not of long duration, for it was made over to the British with the other Dutch settlements in Bengal by a treaty concluded in 1824. The British entered into possession in May 1825, when the Director Overbeck and eight minor officials were granted a pension

From the account given by Mrs. Fenton, who visited the place in January, 1827, it is clear that by this time the Dutch of Chinsura had fallen on evil days. The English quarters were extremely cheerful and neat, but "the part that may be called Dutch exhibits pictures of ruin and melancholy beyond anything you can imagine.

* Toynbee's *Sketch*, p. 8.

You are inclined to think that very many years must have passed away since these dreary habitations were the cheerful abode of man." The space between the houses was so very narrow that two persons only could walk together; and Mrs. Fenton was glad to leave 'this city of silence and decay.' Nor was the appearance of the native town much better. "The character of everything is gloomy, gloomy without the imposing effect produced by the mighty relics of art, or the sublime changes of nature. We frequently pass the dwellings of rich natives, large ruinous-looking houses, the window frames half decayed, the walls black with damp, no pretty garden or clump of trees and shrubs, but a formal range of mango or tamarind trees; nothing to excite the imagination."

The following is a list of the Dutch Directors (with the years, during which they held office), so far as they have been traced:—Mathews Van der Broucke (1658-64), Martinus Huysman (1684), W. de Rov (1706), Antonio Huysman (1712), Mons. Vuist (1724), Patras (1726-27), Sichterman (1744), Huygens (1749), Lous Taillefert (1754), Adrian Bisdome (1754-59), George Louis Vernet (1764-70), Ross (1780), P. Brueys (1783), Titsinh (1789), J. A. Van Braam (1817), and D. Overbeck (1818-25)*. Van der Broucke caused the Hooghly river to be carefully surveyed, and under his order he first regular pilot chart was prepared. Vernet, a Frenchman, was second-in-command at Kâlkâpur when Calcutta was taken by the English and showed great kindness to the English fugitives: Warren Hastings was one of the latter, and Vernet, like Ross, was a warm friend of his.

The first Englishman to visit Bengal was Ralph, Fitch, a pioneer merchant of London, who came to Hooghly among other places about 1588, and on his return "thrilled London in 1591 with the magnificent possibilities of Eastern commerce." In December 1600 the East India Company was incorporated by royal charter under the title of "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies." From the first the Company's servants were desirous of obtaining trading concessions in Bengal, and tried to secure them through the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe; but he was not successful, for he reported in December 1617:—"A *firman* for Bengal cannot be had while the Prince hath Suratt."† Another attempt to open up trade with Bengal was made in 1620, two agents, named Hughes and

THE ENGLISH.

* Yule, Hedges' *Diary*, III, 202-3, I., 160; Wilson, *Early Annals*, I, 270, II., 75, 77; Crawford, *Brief History of Hughli District*, p. 40; Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, I. I. 408, . 15, 18, etc.; Stavorinus, I, 149, 154, 155; Toynbee's *Sketch* pp. 12-13.

† Hedges' *Diary*, III, 162.

Parker, being sent from the factory at Surat to Patna to purchase cloths and establish a branch factory there. The mission was a failure, for the expense of transporting goods from Patna to Agra, and thence to Surat, was great; and in March 1621 Patna was ravaged by a terrible fire, in which their house and merchandise were destroyed.* A fresh attempt was made in 1632, when Peter Mundy was sent from Agra. He stayed at Patna from 17th September to 16th November, but this mission also proved a failure.† In March 1633 the Agent at Masulipatam sent eight Englishmen under Ralph Cartwright to open up trade on the coast. They landed at Harishpur in Orissa, went up to Cuttack, and secured from the Governor a license authorizing free trade in Orissa. Armed with this authority, they established a factory at Hariharpur in Cuttack, and on 16th June Cartwright proceeded to Balasore, where another factory was set up.‡ Owing, however, to the ignorance of the factors, trade languished; and the mortality among the Europeans in Orissa was so great, that about 1642 the factory at Hariharpur was abandoned.§

About this time the English appear to have had ideas of settling at Hooghly, for in 1633 Poule writes from Balasore that, owing to the Portuguese having been restored to favour with the Emperor and re-entered Hooghly, "our expectation of Hugly is frustrayt."‖ When eventually it was decided to establish a factory inland up the Ganges, Captain John Brookhaven was despatched in 1650 with the ship *Lyonesse* and several assistants and given discretion "for the buying and bringing away of goods or settling a factory at Hooghly." The Captain, after arriving at Balasore, despatched James Bridgeman with three assistants to make a settlement at Hooghly, and gave them long instructions under date 14th December 1650.¶ They were to attempt the refining of saltpetre and make experiments in washing silk at Hooghly, while in the purchase of sugar they were to model their methods on those of the Dutch. Having settled their business at Hooghly, they were to go on to Rājmahāl and endeavour to secure a *pharmān* or license for free trade in Bengal through 'Mr. Gabriel Boughton, Chirurgeon to the Prince.' In this humble fashion did the English set about establishing a settlement in Bengal.

* W. Foster, *The English Factories in India*, 1618-1621 (1908).

† Wilson, *Early Annals*, I, 378, note 1.

‡ Bruton's *A Voyage to Bengalla*, l. c. Hedges' *Diary*, III, 176-7; Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, I, 2-16.

§ Hedges' *Diary*, III, 181-2; Wilson, I, 17-21.

‖ C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. I, p. 18.

¶ Hedges' *Diary*, III, 184-87.

In 1657, the Hooghly factory became the head agency in Bengal, with subordinate agencies at Balasore, Cossimbazar and Patna, George Gawton being the first Chief Agent.* He was succeeded next year by Jonathan Trevisa, who rebelled at the exactions of the Mughal Governor of Hooghly. The latter had since 1658 mulcted the British of Rs. 3,000 a year in lieu of custom duties, and in 1661 the exasperated Agent seized a native vessel. The Viceroy, Mir Jumlā, ordered immediate reparation and threatened to seize the factory and expel the English. Trevisa, alarmed at the results of his precipitate action, wrote for orders to Madras, whereupon he was directed to apologize at once and restore the boat. This was done; but the annual payment of Rs. 3,000 had still to be made. Next year (1662) Trevisa further distinguished himself by forbidding an English vessel to come up the river Hooghly, on the ground of its dangers, though the Court desired that their ships should sail up and Dutch vessels of 600 tons did so regularly. In the same year the factory was made subordinate to Madras, the title of the Agent being changed to 'Chief of the Factories in the Bay,' and Trevisa was superseded by William Blake, who was directed to call all the servants of the Company "to account for all actions which hath passed since their being in the Bay." During his tenure of office, in 1668, the English began to undertake the pilotage of the river and thus inaugurated the Bengal Pilot Service.

In 1676, when Streynsham Master, the President of Madras, came to Bengal on a tour of inspection, the question was again debated whether Hooghly or Balasore was the most suitable place for the residence of the Chief; and the Council decided in favour of Hooghly, as 'the key of Bengal.'† In 1679, Master again visited Bengal and reorganized the factories. Under the regulations laid down by him the trade in Bengal was placed under the general control of the Chief and Council at Hooghly. The Council consisted of four members, and there were also allowed for Hooghly a minister, surgeon, a secretary and a steward. The following Agents and Chiefs of Hooghly can be traced for this period:—Captain John Brookhaven (1650), James Bridgeman (1651—53), Paul Walgrave or Waldegrave (1653), George Gawton (1658), Jonathan Trevisa (1658—63), William Blake (1663—69), Shem Bridges (1669-70), Walter Clavell (1670—77), and Mathias Vincent (1677—82).

The first factory of the English in Hooghly adjoined that of the Dutch, and narrowly escaped destruction by floods at the time

* Bruce, *Annals of the East India Co.*, Vol. I, p. 532.

† Hedges' *Diary*, II 236.

when the old Dutch factory was swept away. One result of these floods was that the river in front of the factory was scoured out to a depth of 16 fathoms, forming what was called the Hooghly Hole*. Fearing that the bank would be undermined, the English about 1665, built a new factory, a quarter of a mile higher up*. converting the old factory into a general warehouse, while the new factory was the residence of the Chief and the factors. The pay of the Agent was £100 in 1658, but was raised in 1682 to £200 *plus* a gratuity of £100 per annum. The factors received pay of £20 to £40, and writers £10 a year†. All officers had free quarters, and, if single, free boarding at a public table, or, if married, were allowed diet money. The higher officers were allowed wages for a certain number of servants, besides the use of the general servants of the factory‡. The officers carried on private trade, making use not only of their own money, but also of the sums of the Company lying in their hands. In this way many of them amassed fortunes, often in partnership with the merchants called 'interlopers,' who defied the Company's claim to a monopoly, thus committing what the Directors called "the treacherous and unpardonable sin of complyance with interlopers§."

In 1681 the factories in Bengal were again made independent of Madras, and William Hedges was appointed 'Agent and Governor of the factories in the Bay of Bengal' with orders to seize and send home Vincent, the then Chief of Hooghly, who had been guilty of 'odious infidelity' in countenancing interlopers. Thomas Pitt, the grandfather of the Earl of Chatham, who was the chief interloper, set out from England nearly a month later and arrived in Bengal (in July 1682) before Hedges. He sailed up to Hooghly, took up his quarters at Chinsura, and, with the assistance of the Dutch and Bengali merchants, began to build warehouses and start a new trade. He negotiated with the native governor of Hooghly and, under the title of the New English Company, obtained an order giving him commercial privileges and liberty to build a factory.‖ Hedges succeeded in getting an order for his arrest, but it was never executed. The interlopers readily agreed to pay the Mughal his dues, and no arguments or bribes availed against them¶. They were

* Thomas Bowrey pp. 170-7.

† Hedges' *Diary*, II, 10-11, III, 189.

‡ Regulations of S. Master; *Early Annals*, I, 389.

§ Hedges' *Diary*, II, 11-12.

‖ Hedges' *Diary*, II, 11.

¶ Hedges' *Diary*, I, 55, 130.

also on the best of terms with the Company's factors, and Hedges was powerless to touch them.

Hedges further found that the trade at Hooghly was almost at a standstill owing to the exactions of the customs officers. He resolved to appeal to the Nawāb at Dacca, but his boats were seized and had to make a stealthy escape from Hooghly by night. At Dacca he obtained a number of promises but little more, for after his return to Hooghly the Company's boats were still stopped and their goods seized, while Hedges' bribes failed to secure exemption from custom dues. After having embroiled himself with the Company's servants generally and dissatisfied the Directors completely, Hedges was dismissed in 1683, and Beard was appointed Agent. Beard, a feeble old man, who was unable to deal with the disputes between the English and the local officials, died at Hooghly in 1685, and was succeeded by Job Charnock, then Chief of the Factory at Cossimbazar and second member of the Council.

The situation which Charnock had to face was critical. The interlopers were mischievously active. They were secretly helped by the Company's factors, and they were permitted to buy and sell openly, on payment of custom duties to the Nawāb's officials. The quarrel between the Company and the subordinates of the Nawāb had ended in the Company's boats being stopped, the sale of its silver prohibited, and its trade interfered with. Charnock himself had great difficulty in making his way to Hooghly from Cossimbazar. He had been directed to pay Rs. 43,000 in settlement of a claim made by some native merchants, and the factory was invested by troops to prevent his escape. It was not till April 1686 that he got through the cordon and reached Hooghly*.

When Charnock took over charge, he found the Court of Directors resolved on war. They wrote :—" That, since those Governors have by that unfortunate Accident, and audacity of the Interlopers, got the knack of trampling upon us, and extorting what they please of our estate from us, by the besieging of our factories and stopping of our boats upon the Ganges. They will never forbaer doeing soe till we have made them as sensible of out power as we have of our truth and justice." Accordingly, with the sanction of the King James II, the Company despatched a squadron of six ships and three frigates with six companies on board. Nicholson, who was in command, was instructed to take on board the Company's officers in Bengal, to send

* Hedges' *Diary*, II, 50, 53. According to Orme, (II, 12), he had been scourged by the Nawāb.

an ultimatum to the Nawāb, and to seize all the Mughal vessels he could. If no agreement could be made with the Nawāb, the bulk of the force should take and fortify Chittagong, of which Job Charnock was to be Governor*.

The *Rochester* and one frigate arrived first with a force of 108 soldiers; while a small reinforcement was received from Madras, which, with the garrison at Hooghly, brought the number of the English troops to about 400 men. The arrival of reinforcements alarmed the Nawāb, who ordered 300 horse and 3,000 or 4,000 foot to protect the town. The *Faujdār*, Abdul Ghani, prohibited the supply of provisions to the English and erected a battery of 11 guns to command the English shipping in the Hooghly Hole†.

A rupture soon ensued. On 28th October three English soldiers, who had gone into the bazar to buy victuals, were seized, beaten and carried off to the *Faujdār*. Captain Leslie was immediately ordered out of the factory with a company of soldiers to bring them in, dead or alive. On his way, he was set upon by a body of horse and foot, which he routed. The enemy next fired a number of houses near the English factory, and the old factory was also burnt down. The battery having opened fire on the shipping, a detachment was sent under Captain Richardson to attack it, while the rest of the soldiers were ordered up from Chandernagore. The latter took the battery by assault, and, after spiking and dismounting the guns, carried the fight into the town, burning as they went and driving all before them. In the evening the English ketches and sloops came up and "kept firing and battering the town most part of that night and next day, and making frequent sallies on shore, burning and plundering." The *Faujdār*, through the Dutch, now applied for an armistice. To this the English readily agreed, for they could not have maintained the place against the large force which was hourly expected; and they had no less than 12,000 or 14,000 bags of saltpetre which they were anxious to ship. Charnock, realizing that his position was untenable, entered into some infructuous negotiations with the Nawab, and determined to retire to Hījīlī, where the zamīndār, who was at war with the Mughals, invited the English to build factories and promised assistance. At last, on the 20th December 1686, the English left Hooghly with all their goods, and dropped down the river to Sutanuti.

* Hedges' *Diary*, II, 51, 52.

† Charnock and his Council's letter to the Surat Governor, dated 24th November 1686, Hedges' *Diary*, II, 54.

In January 1687 Charnock again entered into negotiations with the Nawāb, but the latter refused his demands and sent down a Bakshi, named Abdul Samad, to Hooghly with two thousand horse. Hostilities were now resumed, but the rest of the war took place outside this district and need be only briefly noticed. After sacking and burning Balasore, the English fortified themselves in the island of Hījilī, but a truce was concluded in June. The English then handed over the fort, and made their way to Uluberiā, thence to Little Tanna, and eventually in September 1687 arrived at Sutanuti*, where Charnock and his Council remained for more than a year. In the meantime, the London Directors sent out Captain Heath with orders to take off all the English and capture Chittagong. He arrived at Calcutta in September 1688, took away Charnock and his companions, and on 8th November sacked Balasore. He arrived at Chittagong in January 1688, but left it without doing anything and returned to Madras, where Charnock and his assistants stayed for sixteen months. Finally, the courtesy of the new Nawāb, Ibrāhim Khān, induced the Madras authorities to send Charnock and his Council back to Bengal. They arrived at Sutanuti on 24th August 1690. Henry Stanley and Thomas Mackrith were sent to Hooghly, whence the former sent to Charnock such small necessaries as a pair of water jars (*gharās*), three large dishes, and a dozen plates. They were recalled to Calcutta shortly afterwards on the declaration of war with the French. Charnock declined to go back to Hooghly or to a place two miles below it, which was offered by the Musalmān Government, but finally settled at Calcutta, where he died in 1693.†

The attempt of the Company to keep their monopoly of the East Indian trade intact, and their bitter persecution of the free traders or "interlopers," had by this time raised up a number of enemies in England. A new Company was formed, duly constituted under the name of "The English Company trading to the East Indies". Sir Edward Littleton was appointed its President and Agent on the Bay, and with his Council and factors made his head-quarters at Hooghly in 1699.‡ The rival Companies continued their quarrels for several years; but the new Company was generally unfortunate both in its men and

* Charnock and Ellis' letter to the Surat Governor, dated 10th September 1687, Hedges' *Diary* II, 64-69, *cf.* pp. 62-64.

† Hedges' *Diary*, II, 77-88, 283; Wilson, *Early Annals*, I, p. 124, note 1.

‡ Hedges' *Diary*, II, 206-8. At Hooghly, Sir Edward occupied the house of Thomas Pitt, for the rent of which the latter, then President of the Fort St. George on behalf of the Old Company sent a reminder in November 1702 (*Diary* III, 58; *cf.* III, 63).

in its trade. Several assistants died at Hooghly; and a number of military guards died or deserted. Littleton neglected his duties and was found to have misappropriated part of the Company's money. The two Companies were amalgamated in April 1702, when orders were sent to the President to withdraw the out-factories, quit Hooghly and retire to Calcutta.* This was done some time after 4th July 1704, on which date a consultation of the Council at Hooghly is recorded.† In the Rotation Government now set up, the Council was presided over in alternate weeks by Mr. Halsey of the old Company and Mr. Hedges of the new Company, the office of President having been suspended for one year.

Though the English had now made Calcutta their headquarters, they kept up their connection with Hooghly so long as it continued to be the seat of the *Faujdār*. In 1700 we find that the *Faujdār* threatened to send a *Kāzi* to Calcutta to administer justice among the natives; but a timely bribe to the Nāzim, Prince Azīm-us-Shāh, produced an order forbidding this step.‡ Next, in March 1702, the *Faujdār*, in pursuance of the Emperor's proclamation that redress was to be made for the piracies committed by the Europeans, ordered the seizure of all the effects of the old Company at Calcutta, but was deterred from executing his order by the vigorous measures of defence taken by the President, Beard,§ who was determined not "to be always giving way to every little rascal". Later in the same year the *Faujdār*, not satisfied with a present of Rs. 5,000, demanded a larger sum as his price for allowing the free transit of the Company's goods. Beard, however, retaliated by stopping the Mughal ships bound for Surat and Persia, and the *Faujdā* then gave way.‖ In 1708 a newly appointed Governor, a 'hot-headed *phousdar*', gave more trouble, stopping the English trade and imprisoning their servants at Hooghly¶; and in 1713 a force of 60 soldiers had to be sent up to Hooghly to protest against another stoppage of trade and threaten reprisals.** To prevent such interruptions to their commerce, the Council from time to time paid money and gave presents to the Hooghly *Faujdār* and his subordinates; and a *vakil* or agent was kept there as their intermediary.†† The factory

---

* Bruce, *Annals*, III, 514-5; Hedges' *Diary* II, 208-9.

† *Diary*, II, 211.

‡ Stewart, *History*, p. 218.

§ Hedges' *Diary* II, 106-7.

‖ Wilson, *Early Annals*, I, 161.

¶ *Id.* I, I, 179.

** *Id.* II, xli,

†† *Id.* II, 46.

house, however, was left in charge of only two or three peons and a native gardener; and in December 1712, was described as being partly in ruins, and the garden as containing nothing but weeds.*

During the last days of Muhammadan rule Hooghly again figured prominently. When Sirāj-ud-daulā was marching against Calcutta in 1756, the English sent a party of 15 men up to Sukhsāgar to reconnoitre. This gave rise to a rumour that the English were on their way to attack Hooghly, and the Nawāb hurriedly sent down 2,000 horse to hold the town.† Clive and Watson retook Calcutta on 2nd January 1757; and on the 4th January embarked a force of about 200 grenadiers and 300 sepoys on board the *Bridgewater*, the *Kingsfisher* sloop and the *Thunder* bomb ketch, which were sent, with a flotilla of boats and sloops, to surprise Hooghly town. While going up the river, the *Bridgewater* grounded, and owing to the delay thus caused the people of Hooghly had time to carry away most of their effects. At length, with the help of a Dutch pilot from Baranagar, the vessels reached Hooghly on the 9th January and began to bombard the town. Their fire made a small breach in the south-east bastion, after which the sailors, followed by the sepoys and grenadiers, stormed the fort, the garrison of 2,000 men flying before them.

The fort having been captured, the English proceeded to secure possession of the neighbourhood. On the 12th January a small force sallied out to Bandel, which they found full of provisions said to be intended for the Nawāb's army. A force of 5,000 men surrounded the detachment, but after firing Bandel, it fought its way back without loss. On the 15th, after having disabled the enemy's guns, demolished the walls and burnt the houses both within and without the fort, the English proceeded up the river and burnt down the granaries above Bandel (Shāhganj). On the 17th the European troops were sent down to Calcutta; while the sailors and sepoys were employed in plundering the country. The work of destruction was continued on the 19th; on the 20th some more vessels were taken at Chinsura; and at length on the 22nd the fleet left for Calcutta. In the meantime, the Nawāb had been moving down with his army, a spy reporting his arrival at Nayāsarāi on the 16th January. On the 1st February, he wrote a letter to Clive saying that he had arrived at Hooghly, and on the 9th he signed a treaty agreeing not to molest the Company in the enjoyment of their privileges, to permit the free transit of their goods, to restore the factories

---

* *Early Annals* II, 385-6.

† Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, I, 136.

and plundered property, and to permit the Company to establish a mint and fortify Calcutta.

The next important event in the history of the English was the capture of Chandernagore on 23rd March 1757. This will be described later, and here it will suffice to say that Nanda Kumâr, who was then acting as Governor of Hooghly, had been ordered to move to the assistance of the French, but had apparently been bribed and did nothing. Nanda Kumâr was not confirmed, but displaced by Sheikh Amirullā, to whom Clive wrote in June 1757, saying that he was marching to Murshidābād and would destroy the town, if the *Faujdār* interfered with his march, or opposed the passage of boats or supplies. The *Faujdār* meekly yielded, and on the 13th June the English army went past Chinsura, both by river and land, on their eventful march to the battle of Plassey.

In 1759 war broke out between the Dutch and English. Mir Jāfar, the new Nawāb, intrigued with the Dutch, who had grown jealous of the increasing power of the British Company. This brought on the last battle between Europeans in West Bengal, which took place on the Hooghly river at Melancholy Point and on land at Bedarrah, the Dutch, as already related, being signally defeated. Finally, by the treaty signed by Mīr Kâsim Alī in September 1759, the Hooghly district was placed under the East India Company.

THE DANES. THE Danish East India Company war formed in 1612, and their first settlement was at Tranquebar in the Tanjore district. Their first venture, like the second Portuguese venture in the Bay of Bengal, ended in the wreck of their vessel. Its captain, Crape, made his way from the Coromandel Coast to the court of the King of Tanjore, from whom he obtained a grant of land. Here a fort, the 'Dansborg,' was built in 1620, but four years later it became the property of the King of Denmark, to whom the Company owed money.* Before 1633 the Danes must have made their way further up the Bay, for a passage in Bruton's *Journal*† of that year refers to the passes granted by the Danes, Dutch and English to vessels trading on the coast of Orissa. Their first factory in Bengal was established at Balasore, some time after 1636, according to Walter Clavell.‡ It remained their chief factory till 1643 or 1644, when they became involved in a quarrel with the Governor of Balasore, Malik Beg, who, it is said, poisoned the Danes, seized their goods, and demolished

* *District Gazetteer of Tanjore* (1906), p. 233.

† W. Bruton's *Voyage to Bengalla*, 1638, l. c. Wilson's *Early Annals*, I, p. 9.

‡ Hedges' *Diary*, II, p. 240.

their factory. The Danes declared war, but, having neither a fleet nor an army, could do little, the sum total of their accomplishments in 32 years being the capture of 30 Moorish vessels. In 1674 the arrival of a ship of 16 guns and one sloop enabled them to seize five vessels in the Balasore Roads. Thereupon the Governor, Malik Kāsim, promised to give them the same trading privileges as the English, to build a factory for them at Balasore, and to pay them Rs 5,000 to Rs. 6,000 for their expenses On receiving this promise, the Danes gave up the vessels they had seized; but as soon as their Commodore, with five or six men, went into the town and paid a visit to the Governor, the latter detained them, saying that, unless confirmed by the Nawāb, the agreement could not be carried out. In 1676, Wilk Wygbert, another Commodore, came to Balasore in a ship, went up to Hooghly in a sloop, and thence by budgerow to Dacca. Here, at an outlay of Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000, he got a *phármān* from the Nawāb, Shaista Khān, authorising the Danes to trade free of custom dues in Bengal and Orissa. Under this authority a fresh factory was started by the Danes at Balasore in 1676.*

The Danes next set up another factory on the river Hooghly at Gondalpārā in the south-east of what is now the French territory of Chandernagore. A trace of this settlement still survives in the name given to a part of Gondalpārā, viz., *Dinemārdāngā*, the land of the Danes. It was not in existence in 1676 when Streynsham Master came up the Hooghly river, but it must have been started some time before the beginning of the 18th century, when Alexander Hamilton wrote :—"There are several other villages on the river's side on the way to Hooghly, but none remarkable till we come to the Danes' Factory, which stands about four miles below Hooghly. But the poverty of the Danes has made them desert it, after having robbed the Mogul subjects of some of their shipping to keep themselves from starving."† This factory is also mentioned by an "adventurer", who was given letters to "Monsure Attrope, governor of the Danes Factory at Gondulpara," which he visited in 1712.‡

Another factory of the Danes is shown in Valentijn's map (published in 1723), on the east bank of the river opposite the mouth of the river "Bassandheri," *i.e.*, the Kānā Dāmodar, under the name Deense Logie, *i.e.*, the Danish lodge. This factory is also

* Thomas Bowrey, *Countries round the Bay of Bengal*, pp. 181-90. Wygbert was visited at the Balasore factory by Streynsham Master on 2nd September and 18th December 1676.

† *A New Account of the East Indies*, II, p. 19.

‡ C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. I, p. 385.

mentioned by Hamilton :—"At a little below the mouth of it, (the Ganga, *i.e.*, the Rūpnārāyan), the Danes have a thatcht House, but for what Reasons they kept an house there, I never could learn." * A few years earlier, in 1700, Sir Edward Littleton noticed that the Danish assistants were supplied with wives from Europe, and did not marry natives.†

The Danes abandoned their factories along the Hooghly in 1714, as we learn from an entry in the Diary and Consultations Book of the Council at Fort William. "There having been a difference between the Danes and the Moors' Government for some time, on which the Danes have been forced to Leave their Factory, and have seized a Large Suratt Ship Laden with Sugar, Silk and other goods bound for Suratt, and belonging to Merchants there. They are now making the best of their way down the River, to wait for what other Ships shall go out belonging to the Moors and then design for Trincombar."‡ The Mughal Governor of Hooghly having asked the English to mediate, some letters were written by William Hedges and his Council to Mr. Attrup, "*Chief for Affairs of the Royall Company* of Denmark." Jāfar Khān, the Diwān, promised to make their aggressors give the Danes full satisfaction for all the injuries done them and to reimburse them for all the charges they incurred in their defence, and further promised that if they would remain two or three months in the river, he would secure them a royal *pharmān*. Attrup refused the overtures, and a subsequent letter from Madras shows that "the Danes' prize taken from the Moors" arrived there in January 1715 and went on to Tranquebar."§

In 1755 the Danes re-established themselves, having secured from Alī Vardi Khān, at a considerable cost, the grant of a settlement at Serampore. For this grant apparently they were mainly indebted to the good offices of Monsieur Law, the Chief of the French factory at Cossimbazar, who wrote in his Memoirs:—"The previous year (1755) had brought him (Sirāj-ud-daulā) in a good deal of money owing to the business of establishing the Danes in Bengal. In fact, it was only by means of his order that I managed to conclude this affair, and the Nāwāb Alī Verdi Khān let him have all the profit." Renault, the Governor of Chandernagore, also claimed credit for their re-establishment. Whoever was entitled to the credit,

* *A New Account of the East Indies*, Vol. II, p. 5.

† Hedges' *Diary*, II, p. 209.

‡ C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 199.

§ C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 199-203.

the Danes and French had for some time been on very good terms, for two years before this the Danes had been allowed to load and unload cargoes at Chandernagore, where they were seized, and represented by an agent named Soetman.* Soetman was the first Governor of the new settlement and proceeded to take possession on 7th October 1755, but the whole day was passed in disputes with the native officials. Next day the Danish flag was hoisted, and the settlement was loyally named Frederiks nagore after the King of Denmark, Frederick V.

Though the Danes had been allowed to settle at Serampore and to trade in Bengal, they were not permitted to fortify their settlement or keep up a garrison.† In spite of this, Sirāj-ud-daulā, when advancing on Calcutta in 1756, called on them, as well as the French and Dutch, to get their 'vessels of force' ready and attack the English from the river, while he delivered his assault by land. All three nations excused themselves on one pretext or another, the Danish Governor replying that he had neither horse, foot or guns, but was living in a miserable mud hut with only two or three servants.‡ The plea was evidently not accepted, for the Nawāb on his return from the capture of Calcutta, levied from the Danes a fine of Rs. 25,000, a large sum considering that they had then very little trade in Bengal, only one ship, the *King of Denmark*, having come from Tranquebar all that year.§ When Chandernagore was taken by the English on 23rd March 1757, some of the French found refuge at Serampore with the Danes,|| who evidently had not forgotten the help given them two years before. The English Government at Calcutta took umbrage at this. To mark their resentment, the Council stopped the passage of the *King of Denmark* in January 1759, and refused the Danes the loan of four cannon and some ammunition next year. There was a more serious quarrel in 1763. Some British sepoys were charged with assaulting some Danish peons and were sentenced to 25 lashes each. The British, thereupon, invested Serampore, but withdrew on receiving an apology.¶

The decline of Danish trade continued for a few years later, as may be gathered from the account given by Stavorinus in October 1769:—"Going down (from Chinsura) I landed at Serampore,

* J. C. Marshman, *Notes on the Right Bank of the Hooghly*, Calcutta Review, 1845.

† *Bengal in 1756-57*, II, 17, 23.

‡ *Bengal in 1756-57*, I, 5.

§ *Bengal in 1756-57* I, 306-7. II, 79.

|| *Bengal in 1756-57* II, 298, III, 254.

¶ *Long's Selections*.

where the Danes have a factory; this is the most inconsiderable European establishment on the Ganges, consisting only, besides the village occupied by the natives, in a few houses inhabited by Europeans. Their trade is of very little importance."* It soon revived. The servants of the East India Company, not being allowed to remit their savings by bills on the Directors, had to make their remittances through foreign factories. Moreover, England was at war with the United States, France and Holland; and to escape the enemies' privateers and men of-war, the English sent their goods home in the neutral vessels of the Danes. "No fewer than twenty-two ships, mostly of three masts, and amounting in the aggregate to more than 10,000 tons, cleared out from the port in the short space of nine months."† These were the golden days of Serampore. Factors who drew pay of only Rs. 200 a month drunk champagne at Rs. 80 a dozen, and in a few years returned home with large fortunes! These too were the days in which the town became famous in the Christian world as the headquarters of the Baptist missionaries; for in 1799 Marshman, Ward and two other missonaries came to Serampore, where they were soon joined by Carey.

In 1801, hostilities having been resumed with Denmark, Serampore was seized by the British, but was restored next year on the conclusion of the Peace of Amiens. The Danish trade after this continued to flourish, as the Bay swarmed with French privateers, and the Calcutta merchants were only too eager to ship their goods in neutral bottoms under the Danish flag. In 1808, however, war with Denmark having been again declared, Lord Minto, the then Governor-General, sent a detachment of British troops to capture the town, while his son, who was in command of the frigate *Modeste*, took the Danish ships lying in the river. Serampore was then administered by the Judge-Magistrate of Hooghly until 1815, when it was restored to the Danes on the conclusion of the Peace of Kiel. Though the Danes recovered the town, they did not regain their trade. A shoal had formed in front of the town and their goods were ousted by British competition. Between 1815 and 1845 only one vessel visited the port, while in 1813-14 the total revenue was only Rs. 13,231 ‡

The decadence of Serampore at this time is clearly shown by the account of Bishop Heber, who visited it in December 1823. The settlement, he said, had grievously declined since it

---

* *Voyages to the East Indies*, I, 121.

† J. C. Marshman, *Notes on the Right Bank of the Hooghly*, Calcutta Review, (1845).

‡ Hamilton's *Hindostan* (1820), Vol. 1, page 64.

was taken by the British, and all the more because, when it was restored, the Danish Government had not stipulated for the continuance of a grant of 200 chests of opium yearly, which the East India Company had previously supplied at cost price The revenue did not meet current expenses, and the Government had been utterly unable to relieve the suffering recently caused by an inundation. Bishop Heber, however, admired, the place—"a handsome place, kept beautifully clean, and looking more like an European town than Calcutta." He also admired the vigour of the administration of the Governor, Colonel Krefting, a fine old veteran who had been in Bengal for over 40 years. "During the late inundation he was called on for more vigorous measures than usual, since a numerous band of 'Decoits' or river pirates, trusting to the general confusion and apparently defenceless state of the place, attacked his little kingdom, and began to burn and pillage with all the horrors which attend such inroads in this country. The Colonel took the field at the head of his dozen Sepoys, his silver-sticks, policemen, and sundry volunteers, to the amount of perhaps thirty, killed some of the ruffians, and took several prisoners, whom he hanged next morning." At that time a number of persons appear to have been attracted by the cheapness of living in Serampore, and it was also an asylum for debtors. In 1830 the right to shelter debtors was given up by the Danes, and this concession still further diminished its resources, though the frontier duty (called a double duty), which stifled trade with the interior, was abolished.

Eventually, by a treaty concluded on 22nd February 1845, the King of Denmark transferred Serampore with Tranquebar to the British for 12½ lakhs. The treaty specified that the settlement transferred was the town of Frederiksnagore or Serampore, comprising 60 *bighās*, and the districts of Serampore, Akna and Pearapore, for which districts an annual sum of Rs. 1,601 was to be paid to the zamīndārs of Sheoraphuli. It was further stated that it contained the following public property, viz., the Government House, Secretary's house, and offices, court-house with jail annexed, the Danish Church, a bazar, two small guard-houses on the river bank, a canal, public roads and bridges * Ratifications of the treaty were exchanged on 6th October, and the place was made over to the English on 11th October 1845.

The following Danish Governors can be traced:—Soetman (1755-56), Ziegenbalk or Ziegenbalg (1758-59), Demarchez

---

* Calcutta Review, 1845, page 495-6; Crawford, *Brief History*, page 54; Toynbee, *Sketch*, page 164.

(1763-64), Colonel Bie (1789-1805), Colonel Jacob Krefting (1805—08, 1815—28), J. S. Hohlenberg (1828—33), Colonel Rehling (1836), who was subsequently Governor of Tranquebar and P. Hansen (1836—45) Colonel Crawford gives as the last Governor one Lindeman (1842—45), but the Bengal and Agra Gazetteer of 1841 shows the Hon'ble P. Hansen as Governor, and the latter signed the treaty of 22nd February 1845, which distinctly refers to him as "Peter Hansen, Councillor of State, Governor of His Danish Majesty's Possessions in India, Knight of the Order of Dannebrog." The certificate of exchange was signed by L. Linhard, who was Judge and Magistrate in 1841.

THE FRENCH. According to the English factory records, the first settlement of the French in Bengal was made at Hooghly and was the result of an accident. In a letter to the Court of Directors, dated Balasore, the 28th December 1674, Walter Clavell. the English Company's chief representative in the Bay, reported that in the preceding year a ship of the French King's, named the *Flemen*, while returning to St. Thomé, was separated from the rest of the squadron sent by the Viceroy (M. De la Haye) owing to foul weather. Not being able to make Coromandel, she came to the Balasore Roads, where she was surprised and taken by three Dutch merchantmen bound for Hooghly They 'had the confidence to bring her up to Hooghly before their one factory;' and several specious pretences were made that the ship should be taken from the Dutch and redelivered to the French, to which purpose the Governor of Balasore persuaded some of the French to complain personally at Dacca. The upshot was that the Dutch were fain to buy the prize of the Moors, and the French were sent away with good words and liberty to build factories and carry on trade in what part of Bengal they would. "In Hugly they made a small house neere the Dutch Factory, from which the Dutch by their application and present to the Moores, have routed them; and they thereupon pretendedly, but really because they can borrow no more money, have lately left Hugly, and are intended for the Coast in an open boate, and taking a long farewell of Bengala, where they are indebted about Rupees 8,000."*

As the sloop *Fleming* left St. Thomé in April 1673, the Frenchmen presumably were brought to Hooghly towards the close of that year, and after allowing for their journey to and from Dacca, they in all probability built their 'small house' at Hooghly about 1674.

* Thomas Bowrey, *Countries, etc*, 1905, quoting (in p. 69, note 3) *Factory Records*, Hugli, No. 4, p. 22 f; *cf*. Delestre, *Relation du Journal d'un voyage fait aux Indes Orientales*, (1677), p. 185.

It is this house evidently which is alluded to by the English Agent Streynsham Master under date 13th September 1676:—"...Less than 2 miles short of Hugly we passed by the Dutch Garden, and a little further by a large spot of ground which the French had laid out in a factory, the gate to which was standing, but was now in the possession of the Dutch. Then we came by the Dutch factory."* From this description it appears that the factory was in the extreme north of the modern Chandernagore, just south of Chinsura. It also appears that the French did not leave Bengal altogether, when they abandoned their settlement, for Master, writing on 23rd September 1676, noted that at Cossimbazar he passed by the spot of ground allotted to the French.†

It is not certain when Chandernagore was reoccupied by the French. The common tradition is that permission to erect a factory here was granted to the French in 1688 by a *pharmān* of the Emperor Aurangzeb obtained during the rebellion of Subhā Singh in 1696-97.‡ The Dutch, French and English, it is said, hired soldiers and requested permission to put their factories into a state of defence. The Nawâb Ibrāhim Khān gave them a general authority to provide for their own safety; and acting on this, they raised walls with bastions round their factories. In this way Fort Gustavus at Chinsura, Fort Orleans at Chandernagore, and Fort William at Calcutta are said to have been built.§ In 1701 Chandernagore was placed under the authority of the Governor of Pondicherry. For many years the French trade languished, as may be gathered from the remark made by Alexander Hamilton, in the beginning of the 18th century, that the French had a factory at Chandernagore with a few families living near it, but not much trade for want of money,‖ and "a pretty little church to hear mass in, which is the chief business of the French in Bengal."

In 1731 Joseph Francoix Dupleix was appointed Intendant of Chandernagore, and during the ten years in which he held that office he transformed the place. According to Mr. E. Sterling, Collector of Hooghly—"Chandernagore under his able government became the astonishment and envy of its neighbours. Money

---

* Hedges' *Diary*, II, 233.

† *Diary* of St. Master, l.c., Thomas Bowrey, *Countries, etc.*, p. 213, note 2.

‡ Mr. E. Sterling, Collector of Hooghly, states in a letter dated 29th July 1842, that this permission was obtained through a Persian named Macarah. Probably he refers to Marcar, an Armenian merchant, who built a church at Chinsura in 1695, or to his son, who died at Hooghly in 1697.

§ Stewart, *History*, p. 207. Fort Gustavus, however, had walls before 1665.

‖ Grose, *A New Account of the East Indies*, I, 312, 316.

poured in from every quarter. New and surprising sources of commercial wealth were opened, and vast designs of wealth emanated from this one man, in whom the most unlimited confidence was placed. His measures enriched individuals, while his policy extended the reputation of his nation. Never perhaps did the glory of the French and their prosperity acquire a more extended field than in this colony on the bank of the Ganges."* So also Malleson writes:—"From the period of its first occupation to the time when Dupleix assumed the Intendantship, Chandernagore had been regarded as a settlement of very minor importance. Starved by the parent Company in Paris, it had been unable, partly from want of means, and partly also from the want of enterprise on the part of the settlers, to carry on any large commercial operations. Lodges, or commercial posts, dependent upon Chandernagore, had also been established at Cossimbazar, Jougdia, Dacca, Balasore and Patna. But their operations were of small extent. The long stint of money on the part of the Company of the Indies had had, besides, a most pernicious effect upon the several intendants and their subordinates. The stagnation attendant upon poverty had lasted so long, that it had demoralized the community. The members of it had even come to regard stagnation as the natural order of things. The place itself bore evidence to the same effect. It had a ruined and forlorn appearance; its silent walls were overgrown with jungle; and whilst the swift stream of the Hooghly carried past it eastern merchandise intended for the rivals who were converting the mud huts of Sutanuti into the substantial warehouses of old Calcutta, the landing places of Chandernagore were comparatively deserted.

"To govern a settlement thus fallen into a state of passive and assenting decrepitude, Dupleix was deputed in 1731. He saw, almost at a glance, the capabilities of the place, and, conscious of his own abilities, having tried and proved at Pondicherry his ideas regarding the power of trade, he felt that the task of restoring Chandernagore, would, under his system, be comparatively easy. He at once set in action the large fortune he had accumulated, and induced others to join in the venture. He bought ships, freighted cargoes, opened communications with the interior, attracted native merchants to the town. Chandernagore soon felt the effect of her master's hand. Even the subordinates whom he found there, recovering, under the influence of his example, from their supineness, begged to be allowed to join in the

---

* Letter of Mr. E. Sterling, Collector of Hooghly, dated 29th July 1842, l. c. Toynbee's *Sketch*, p. 15.

trade. Dupleix had room for all. To some he advanced money, others he took into partnership, all he encouraged. He had not occupied the Intendantship four years, when, in place of the half-dozen country-boats which, on his arrival, were lying unemployed at the landing-place, he had at sea thirty or forty ships, a number which increased before his departure to seventy-two, engaged in conveying the merchandise of Bengal to Surat, to Jedda, to Mocha, to Bussora, and to China. Nor did he neglect the inland trade. He established commercial relations with some of the principal cities in the interior, and even opened communications with Tibet. Under such a system, Chandernagore speedily recovered from its forlorn condition. From having been the most inconsiderable, it became, in a few years, the most important and flourishing of the European settlements in Bengal."*

After the departure of Dupleix on transfer to Pondicherry (1741), the Marāthā raids, the unsettled condition of the country, want of funds and lack of vigour on the part of his successors, all combined to reduce the trade of the French in Bengal. There is ample proof of its decline. For instance, M. Renault, the Governor of Chandernagore, in a letter to Dupleix dated 30th September 1757, stated that when he took charge of the factory (in 1754 ?), it was in debt to the extent of 26 or 27 lakhs, but that by exercising his personal credit he managed to send back the next year three ships laden with rich cargoes†. Again, in a letter of the Dutch Council at Hooghly to their Supreme Council at Batavia, dated 24th November 1756, it is said that the French "have done no business these last few years";‡ and in another letter to the Assembly in Holland, dated 2nd January 1757, they wrote that "what the French are about to send by Pandichery and the Danes by Tranquebara, will be of but trifling importance.§"

In 1756, when war threatened to break out between the French and the English, the European garrison at Chandernagore numbered only 112 officers and men. The French attempted to finish one of the bastions of Fort Orleans which had been begun in Alī Vardi's time (1750); while the English on their part began to clear out the Marāthā ditch and repair the fortifications close to Fort William. Thereupon Sirāj-ud-daulā sent orders to both to demolish the works. The French Agent, M. Law, persuaded the Nawāb that they were merely repairing old works; but the

* G. Malleson. *The Rise of the French Power in India*, Calcutta Review, 1866.

† *Bengal in 1756-57*, III, 253.

‡ *Id.*, I, 307.

§ *Id.*, II, 80.

English Agent at Calcutta, Mr. Drake, sent a reply, which the Nawāb chose to regard as offensive and impertinent.* As is well known, the rupture with the English ended in the capture of Calcutta and the massacre of the Black Hole. Both Sirāj-ud-daulā and the English applied for help to the French, who declined to side with either party, but offered to shelter the English in their fort. While on his march to Calcutta, the Nawāb forcibly took the French boats to transport his men across the Ganges, and on his return he levied from them a fine of Rs. 3,40,000.† This sum they paid on receiving three lakhs sent from France by the Company in the ship *Saint Contest*.‡

In December 1756 news came that war had been declared between France and England. Two French Deputies visited Calcutta on the 4th January 1757 and asked Admiral Watson his intentions regarding neutrality. The Admiral offered them an alliance, offensive and defensive, against the Nawāb. This they declined, on which the Admiral replied that he would be "forced to try his luck." Next month the Nawāb concluded a treaty with the English, and on his way back past Chandernagore, sent friendly messages to M. Renault, repaid him one lakh out of the fine he had levied, granted the French a *parwāna* with all the privileges allowed to the British, and even offered them the town of Hooghly if they would ally themselves with him. The French took the money, but declined the alliance. The English believed, however, that they had a secret alliance with Sirāj-ud-daulā and determined to crush the French before attacking the Nawāb. Futile negotiations followed, and the English, having received reinforcements, resolved to declare war. On 11th March Clive charged the French with sheltering British deserters, and next day marched to within 2 miles of Chandernagore, sending a summons to M. Renault to surrender, to which the latter sent no reply. On the 14th, Clive read out the declaration of war and began the siege.

The fort was ill-prepared for an attack, being short in men, guns, ammunition and engineering officers, while the area to be defended was large. M. Renault could muster with great difficulty 237 soldiers (including 45 pensioners and sick), 120 sailors, 70 half-castes and private Europeans, 100 civilians, 167 sepoys and 100 topasses, in all 794 men. After the loss of their outposts, the French withdrew into the fort and made a gallant defence, repulsing several attacks. On the river side the French had blocked the channel with four ships and a hulk. Admiral Watson came

* *Bengal in 1756-57*, III, 165.

† *Bengal in 1756-57*, I, 210.

‡ *Bengal in 1756-57*, III, 253.

up to help in the attack, with a fleet consisting of the *Kent*, the *Tiger* and the *Salisbury*, with the *Bridgewater* and the *Kingfisher*. On the 23rd they moved through the sunken ships, along buoys carefully laid the previous day; and at about 7 A.M. the *Tiger* and the *Kent* took up their position opposite the north-east and south-east bastions. Then ensued a sharp but short cannonade between the ships and the fort batteries, while Clive's troops attacked from the land side. The *Kent* was so terribly damaged as to be unfit for sea again, and the *Salisbury* was almost as bad; but the fort bastions were completely breached, and the French gunners were almost all killed. Consequently, M. Renault at about 9-30 A.M. hoisted the white flag. Articles of capitulation were agreed upon, and were signed by Admirals Watson and Pocock, and also by Clive, after some objections on Admiral Watson's part to Clive being associated with him. A number of the French escaped to Serampore and Chinsura, and some joined M. Law at Cossimbazar. The rest were allowed parole, but eventually, on the ground of having broken their parole, were imprisoned in Calcutta.* The capture of Chandernagore was of immense importance to the British both by clearing the way for the final settlement with the Nawāb and also by providing them with a large supply of guns and ammunition; the loot alone is said to have been sold for £130,000.

In 1765 Chandernagore was restored to the French represented by John Law of Lauriston, Commandant of the French establishment in the East Indies It was restored in accordance with a treaty between Great Britain, France and Spain concluded at Paris in 1763, which contained the proviso that the French engaged "not to erect fortifications, or to keep troops, in any part of the Soubah of Bengal" (Article XI)†. The English were strict on this point, and Stavorinus (1769-70) relates how M. Chevalier, the French Governor, who had caused a deep ditch to be dug round the town, was forced to have it filled up by an English engineer aided by 800 sepoys.‡ The French were, however, allowed to keep a certain small number of guns for saluting, and to hoist their flag over their factory.‡

Late in 1768, or early in 1769, the French appear to have had a quarrel with the Nawāb, in which they certainly came off worst. It is described as follows by Colonel Pearse in a letter dated 23rd

---

* *Bengal in 1756-57*, II, 312. The French had 40 killed and 70 wounded, the British 32 killed and 99 wounded (Admiral Watson's letter dated the 31st March 1757).

† Grose, II, 477-8.

‡ *Voyages*, I, 529-30, III, 70.

February 1769 :—" The French had shipped off a great deal of money; and order was issued forbidding that any should be sent off from the country. The Nabob of Bengal, or Patna, I do not know which, though I believe the former, ordered his peons to surround Chandernagore till it should be re-landed. The French fired on them from the ship, by which many were killed and wounded; the consequence was the destruction of the town. The Nabob's people pulled down the houses and laid every thing in ruins. Monsieur Chevalier wrote to the Governor of Fort William, desiring that the neutrality which subsisted between the two nations might continue (for he was determined to march against the Nabob), and that the ship might not be molested. He was answered, that if she attempted to pass, she would be fired on by the guns of the Fort. The Nabob having demanded our assistance, the ship was afterwards seized, but I hear since that she is gone. The Nabob has ordered all the French down; trade is entirely stopped, which may perhaps end in trouble."*

In 1778, on the outbreak of war in Europe, the English again occupied Chandernagore. Colonel Dow quietly invested the town, and then set out with a company of sepoys to Ghiretti in search of the Governor Chevalier. His wife pretended he was ill, and Dow found that he had escaped, the Commandant, Hanquart, handing over the town in his absence.† The English, however, withdrew on the conclusion of peace in 1783.

During the French Revolution the citizens of Chandernagore shared in the republican fervour of their countrymen. The Governor fled to his country-house at Ghiretti, but was brought back to the town by an excited mob, which wished to copy the Parisians' march to Versailles. There he was kept a captive for some time in spite of the demands made by Lord Cornwallis for his release. Eventually, it was decided to send the royalists in chains to the Isle of France, but Cornwallis stopped the brig on which they were shipped while on its way down the Hooghly and released the captives.‡ According to another account, the Governor was refused admission to the town, and seeing no hope of any change in the sentiments of the republicans, withdrew to Calcutta and thence to Pondicherry.§ In June 1793, during the war following the revolution, Chandernagore was reoccupied by the English without opposition, and was administered by a special officer,

* *Bengal Past and Present*, July 1908, p.p. 311-12.

† Letter from Col. Dow, *Bengal Past and Present*, July 1908 pp. 391-92.

‡ *Notes on the right bank of the Hooghly*, Calcutta Review, 1845; *Chandernagore*, Cal. Rev. 1899.

§ Selections *Calcutta Gazette* under date 18th October 1792.

Mr. Richard Birch. It was restored by the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, only to be seized again a few months later on the resumption of hostilities. It was then administered by the Judge-Magistrate of Hooghly, and was finally made over to the French in 1816, after having been almost uninterruptedly in British possession for 23 years. While under the British Government, Chandernagore, as well as Chinsura and Serampore, is said to have swarmed with receivers of stolen goods, cheats, swindlers and fraudulent pawnbrokers.* When Bishop Heber visited it in 1823, "the streets presented a remarkable picture of solitude and desolation", and the Bishop saw "no boats loading or unloading at the quay, no porters with burdens in the streets, no carts, no market people, and in fact only a small native bazar and a few dismal-looking European shops."

The Prussians were another European nation that effected a settlement in this district. This settlement was indirectly due to the enterprise of Frederick the Great, who having gained posseession of East Friesland in 1744, endeavoured to convert its capital, Embden, into a great northern port. With this object he founded, in 1753, the *Bengalische Handels-Gesellschaft* (also known as the Bengal Company of Embden, the Embden East India Company, and the Prussian Asiatic Company). The Prussians had obviously some difficulties to face before gaining a footing in Bengal. "If the Germans come here," the Nawāb wrote to the English, "it will be very bad for all the Europeans, but for you worst of all, and you will afterwards repent it; and I shall be obliged to stop all your trade and business . ...Therefore take care that these German ships do not come." "God forbid that they should come," was the pious response of the President of the English Council, "but should this be the case, I am in hopes they will be either sunk, broke, or destroyed."† Still, the Prussians appear to have established themselves in the district "three or four years" before 1756,‡ on the same terms as those allowed to the Danes, viz., they might carry on their trade on payment of custom duties and hire houses for themselves and warehouses for their goods, but not erect fortifications or keep garrisons.§ Their factory appears to have been a mile south of Fort Orleans at Chandernagore,‖ and had gardens attached to it, which are several times referred to as the Prussian gardens.

THE PRUSSIANS.

---

* Hamilton's *Hindostan* (1820).

† *Imperial Gazetteer of India,* II, 467.

‡ *Bengal in 1756-57,* I, 273.

§ *Bengal in 1756-57,* I, 117; II, 17, 23.

‖ *Do.* II, 285, 307; III, 63, 64.

The year 1756 was a disastrous one for the Prussians. In June Sirāj-ud-daulā extorted Rs. 5,000 from them. In August their only ship, the *Prince Henry of Prussia*, was wrecked while entering the Ganges, owing to the misconduct of an English pilot Hendrick Walters,* whom the Board dismissed for his carelessness; while the supercargoes invested the money they had brought out, to the extent of Rs. 2,50,000, with the English for homeward trade.† Their position was, in fact, so bad that Mr. John Young, the Chief of the Prussian factory, seeing himself "detested, despised and not knowing how to support himself with honour" withdrew to the English with merchandise worth Rs. 80,000.‡

After these losses, what little trade they had dwindled still further owing to the rivalry of the other European companies. Their pilots refused to serve the Prussian ships, and a letter from the English Court of Directors, dated 25th March 1757, absolutely forbade the Company's servants to have any dealings with them or give them any assistance in their mercantile affairs, though if their ships wanted water, provisions or real necessaries, they might be supplied 'in accordance with the custom of nations in amity one with the other.' The Company was soon afterwards wound up; and the Proceedings of Calcutta, dated 21st August 1760, record a letter from John Young, dated London, 18th July 1759, requesting the English to take possession of all the effects of the Royal Prussian Bengal Compay.§

THE FLEMISH.

The Flemish also for a short time carried on trade in the district. The merchants of Ostend, Antwerp, and other towns in Flanders and Brabant appear to have endeavoured to get some share in the trade with the East Indies early in the 18th century, for in 1720, and again in 1721, they sent six ships, of which one was consigned to Bengal; their principal station was at Coblom on the coast of Coromandel. In 1722 the Ostend Company was formed, and a year later it had founded and lost a settlement on the Hooghly. Of this there is an interesting account in the *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, which however confounds the Flemish with the Danes. "They had," it states, "no factory in Bengal and carried on commercial transactions through the agency of the French;" but with the assistance of the latter obtained permission from the Nawāb, Murshid Kuli Khān, to build a factory at Bânkibazar on the eastern bank of the Hooghly, and set to work to erect a strong building. The European nations feared their rivalry, for

* *Bengal in 1756-57*, I, 214, 306-7; II, 79.
† *Do.* II, 79.
‡ *Do.* II, 179; *cf* I, 62, 194.
§ Long's *Selections*.

"placing obliquely the cap of vanity on the head of pride, they bragged they would sell woollen-stuffs, velvet, and silk-stuffs at the rate of gunny-cloth." The other Europeans accordingly intrigued against them, and having gained over the *Faujdār* of Hooghly, got him to induce the Nawāb to order the closure of the factory. The Danes defied the Mughals, mounted cannon, and with the help of the French prepared for resistance. The *Faujdār* of Hooghly then sent a force under his Deputy Mīr Jâfar (apparently the subsequent Nawāb of Bengal), which cut off their supplies Though the Indian servants all fled, and he had only 13 men left, who were, moreover, reduced to starvation, the Chief still offered a desperate resistance. At last, he had his arm shattered by a cannon-ball, and "was obliged, in consequence, at dead of night, to scuttle out of the factory, and, embarking on board a vessel, he set sail for his own native country. Next morning, the factory was captured; but save and except some cannon-balls, nothing of value was found." The gateway and tower were then razed to the ground and Mīr Jâfar returned in triumph to Hooghly.*

The capture of the factory took place according to Alexander Hamilton in 1723, and this date is probably correct, for Hamilton's work (*A New Account of the East Indies*) was published in 1727, being republished in 1744. It is also confirmed by two other facts, *viz.*, (1) the whole transaction is ascribed by the *Riyāẕu-s-Salātin* to the time of Murshid Kuli Khān, who died in 1725, and (2) the Ostend Company had its charter suspended in 1727, and was suppressed in 1731. Stewart adds some interesting details as to the attempts of the Flemish to tap the trade of Bengal. According to his account, the first ship sent by the Company to Bengal, the *Emperor Charles*, which mounted 30 guns, was lost in going up the Ganges. The greater part of her cargo was, however, saved; and the officers and crew took possession of Bānkibazar, and erected temporary houses. In the two following years, three ships, of a larger size than the first, arrived in Bengal, and completely established the Ostend trade in that province; and as they undersold the other Europeans in various articles, their factory quickly rose in estimation. At first, the factors resided in houses constructed of mats and bamboos; but they afterwards built brick dwellings, and surrounded their factory with a wall, having bastions at the angles: they also cut a ditch, communicating with the river, of such a depth as to admit sloops of considerable burthen.

---

* *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, pp. 276-8. Hamilton states that after being forced to quit their factory the Flemish found protection with the French at Chandernagore.

Stewart then mentions the suspension of the charter, and says that, notwithstanding this prohibition, the private merchants occasionally sent out ships to India ; and, as the agent of the head of the factory in Bengal was a person of great activity and determination, he continued to furnish them with cargoes. This traffic, although carried on clandestinely, could not escape the notice of the Dutch and English, the latter of whom sent a squadron, under the command of Captain Gosfright of the ship *Fordwich*, to blockade the river Ganges. The Commodore sailed up the river ; and having obtained intelligence that two Ostend ships were anchored between Calcutta and Bānkibazar, despatched two of his squadron to take them. On the first shot being fired, the *Saint Theresa*, the smallest of the Ostend ships, struck her colours, was immediately taken possession of, and carried to Calcutta ; but the other slipped her cable, and took shelter under the guns of Bānkibazar factory, whither it was not deemed expedient to follow her ; and she afterwards had the good fortune to escape. Stewart then proceeds to give substantially the same account of the capture of the fort as that given above, but ascribes it to 1633.*

The Flemish appear not to have given up all hope of sharing in the trade of Bengal even after this reverse, for isolated factors are mentioned as being in existence at Bānkibazar as late as 1744.† M. Law in a letter written in 1756 refers to "the affair of the Ostend Company in 1744 ;"‡ and there is a curious reference in the MS. Bengal Consultations for 14th October 1744 (communicated by Mr. J. S. Cotton) showing that the Ostenders were then again expelled from Bānkibazar. This is presumably the occurrence referred to by Orme, who says, with a slight difference as to the date, that Alī Vardi Khān, 'in the year 1748, on some contempt of his authority, attacked and drove the factors of the Ostend Company out of the river of Hughly.'§

The mixing up of the dates of the first and second expulsion of the Ostenders has apparently caused some confusion in different accounts of their settlements ; and there has been also some confusion about the nationality of the merchant adventurers who held Bānkibazar. The *Riyāzu-s-Salātin*, for instance, ascribes the establishment and defence of the factory to the Danes. Stewart, after giving a full account of the formation of the Ostend Company and of the installation of their officers and agents at

* Stewart, *History of Bengal* (1847) pp. 263–6.

† *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II, p. 466.

‡ *Bengal in 1756-57*, III, 210.

§ Orme's *History*, II, 45.

Bānkibazar, calls it the German factory and its defenders Germans. Mr. Hill also in *Bengal in 1756-57*, though he refers to Bānkibazar as being held by the servants of the Ostend Company, enters it in his Index as 'the Emden Company or Prussian settlement', and speaks of its defence by the 'Emdeners'.*

In concluding this sketch of the early European settlements mention may be made of the native names given to them and to the nations which held them. The Portuguese were called *Firingis* (from Frank), their quarters *Firingi-tolā*, and their soldiers "*topasses*", either from *top* a gun or from *topi* a hat. The Dutch were called *Olandāz* from Hollandois; the French *Farāsi* and their settlement *Farāsdāngā* from Français; the English *Angrez* or *Ingrez* from Anglais, or English, and the Danes *Dinemār* and their settlement *Dinemār-dāngā* from Denmark. **VERNACULAR NAMES.**

* *Bengal in 1756-57*, I, xxx, xxxvi; III, 210 (foot-note).

CHAPTER IV.

THE PEOPLE.

GROWTH OF POPULATION.

In 1872, when the first census of Bengal was taken, the population of the district as now constituted* was returned at 1,119,631. It decreased to 974,992 in 1881, but rose to 1,034,296 in 1891, to 1,049,041 in 1901, and to 1,090,097 in 1911.

In the nine years following the census of 1872, the population declined by no less than 13 per cent., owing mainly to the terrible epidemic of malarial fever known as Burdwān fever. The Census Commissioner for Bengal estimated the loss of population in the twelve years during which it prevailed at no less than 650,000; for, apart from actual mortality, the fever reduced the vitality of the survivors, thus diminishing the birth-rate, and also forced a number of its inhabitants to leave the district for healthier localities. "It is true," he remarked, "that this terrible epidemic did not claim so many victims in the decade which has elapsed since the census of 1872 as in that which preceded it, but the ravages of the disease have not yet been repaired, the ruined villages have not yet been rebuilt, jungle still flourishes where populous hamlets once stood, and while many of those who fled before the fever have not returned, the impaired powers of the survivors have not sufficed to fill the smiling land with a new population." The next decade witnessed a distinct recovery, the census of 1891 recording an increase of 6 per cent., though the district regained only half of the inhabitants it lost in the previous nine years. This advance was due to the general abatement of malarial fever, and in the Serampore subdivision, where it was greatest, to three special causes, viz., the reclamation of marshy swamps effected by the Dānkuni and Rājāpur drainage schemes, the opening of the Tārakeswar Railway, and the establishment of five jute mills and one bone mill, which attracted immigrants.

* The Arāmbāgh subdivision was not included in the district in 1872; the Singti outpost of the Khānākul thāna was transferred to the Howrah district after the census of 1891; and after the census of 1901 three villages were transferred to Burdwān.

The census of 1901 revealed an increase of only 1·4 per cent, the Arāmbāgh subdivision having a very small increase and the Serampore subdivision an increase of 3·3 per cent, while the Hooghly subdivision had a slight falling-off of population. This result is due to a rise in the number of immigrants by nearly 40,000 and a diminution in the number of emigrants by over 33,000. Conditions were otherwise unfavourable, as may be gathered from the summary given in the Bengal Census Report of 1901:— CENSUS OF 1901.

"During the last decade there have been no specially violent outbreaks of cholera or small-pox. Cholera was bad in several years, but the mortality so caused was but a small fraction of that due to fever. The country is flooded yearly by the spill of the Dāmodar. Its surface is but little above sea level, and the drainage is bad and is yearly getting worse, as the silting-up of the old streams and watercourses continues. The soil is thus water-logged to an exceptional extent. The peculiarly malignant Burdwān fever has disappeard, but even now the fevers of the district are of an unusually virulent kind. The death-rate is consequently high, and in only two years of the decade have the recorded births been more numerous than the deaths......In spite of the immigration that has taken place, the district is still less populous by 70,000 than it was in 1872, and even then the district had suffered terribly from the fever epidemic for nearly a decade. It seems very doubtful whether it will ever fully recover its losses until the drainage problem is solved."

The main statistics of the census of 1901 are given below. Detailed statistics of the census of 1911 are not yet available.

SUBDIVISION.	Area in square miles.	NUMBER OF		Occupied houses.	POPULATION.		Variation between 1891 and 1901 in percentage.
		Towns.	Villages.		Total.	Per square mile.	
Sadar or Hooghly	440	2	939	81,363	308,474	701	−0·3
Serampore... ...	343	5	783	102,734	413,178	1,205	+3·3
Arāmbāgh... ...	406	1	658	80,201	327,389	806	+0·8
District Total ...	1,189	8	2,380	264,298	1,049,041	882	+1·4

The average density of population is very high, being surpassed in only three districts in the Province, viz., Howrah, Muzaffarpur and Sāran; while the Serampore subdivision, with more than twelve hundred souls per square mile, supports a more teeming population than any district except the metropolitan district of Howrah. Moreover, the district contains a large quantity of waste and uncultivable lands, and the pressure of population on Density.

the cultivated portion is therefore all the greater; but it is not as yet excessive owing to the general prosperity of the people, the fertility of the soil, and the industrial expansion which has been so marked a feature of the economic history of Hooghly in the last 50 years. The lands under cultivation yield rich crops of different kinds, for which a ready market and good prices can be obtained owing to the proximity of the metropolis. A large proportion of the people, moreover, obtain their livelihood in non-agricultural pursuits; and the organized industries of the district afford them ample employment and good wages.

In the Ārāmbāgh subdivision, the population is evenly distributed, rising from 736 per square mile in the laterite tract of thāna Goghāt to 894 in the fertile alluvial thāna of Khānākul. The density in the Serampore subdivision is not so uniform. The Serampore thāna is the most thickly populated, including, as it does, five municipalities along the Hooghly with numerous mills and other industries, and having easy communication with Calcutta and Howrah by rail, river and road. This portion is thoroughly urban, with an average of 4,255 per square mile. Behind it stretches thāna Chanditalā, a semi-urban tract, which supports 1,381 persons per square mile. In this thāna there are populous villages crowded along the Saraswatī, and it is also drained by the Dānkuni and Rājāpur drainage channels, and is traversed by the old Benāres road and the Howrah-Shiakhālā Railway. In the other three thānas of this subdivision the pressure on the soil is more evenly distributed, density varying only from 843 in the rather backward thāna of Haripāl to 923 per square mile in thāna Singur lying just behind Serampore.

In the Hooghly subdivision there are marked variations. The most densely-peopled part is the Hooghly thānā with the two municipalities of Hooghly and Bānsberiā. It is practically a continuation of the riparian municipal tract, and has a density of 1,826 per square mile. The other thānas vary considerably. The low deltaic thāna of Balāgarh and the feverish rural thāna of Polbā have only 538 and 543 persons per square mile, respectively, while there are 708 per square mile in the fertile though unhealthy thāna of Dhaniākhāli. Broadly speaking, the inhabitants cluster most thickly along the Hooghly river up to Tribenī, while in the interior the density is greatest in the south and diminishes slowly towards the north and the west, the most populous villages lying on the banks of old streams, such as the Saraswatī, the Knāā Nadī, the Dāmodar (east bank), and the Kānā Dwārakeswar.

Migration. The statistics compiled at the census of 1901 show that migration from and to this district is unusually active, 11·7 per cent. of the

population being emigrants and 13·3 per cent. immigrants. Among emigrants, *i.e.*, natives of this district enumerated elsewhere, seven-twelfths were males, the bulk of whom had migrated to the metropolis and the adjoining districts of Howrah and the 24-Parganas. Such emigration is largely of a temporary nature, many clerks, shop-keepers and workmen taking advantage of the facilities afforded by the railway to return home daily or periodically on Sundays and holidays. On the whole, the volume of emigration is decreasing, the total number of emigrants falling from 156,241 in 1891 to 122,841 in 1901.

On the other hand, the volume of immigration is increasing, both because of the increasing demand for residence in places from which Calcutta is easily accessible and still more because of the labour attracted by the local mills, brick-fields and other industrial concerns. The number of immigrants increased from 99,994 in 1891 to 139,714 in 1901, the bulk being labourers, as is apparent from the preponderance of males (81,823) over females (57,891). The places which contributed most largely to this influx are Bānkurā (44,289), Midnapore (16,116), Patna Division (17,615), and the United Provinces (12,069). To these immigrant coolies are due the large increase of 17·3 per cent. in Serampore thāna and the small increase of 1·9 per cent. in Chandītalā thāna.

Towns and villages.

The district may be divided into three tracts, urban, semi-urban and rural. Broadly speaking, the urban tract consists of the narrow riparian strip between the Hooghly on the east and the railway on the west. The French town of Chandernagore and all the municipal towns, except Arāmbāgh, lie in one continuous line in this strip, viz., from Tribenī southwards Bānsberiā, Hooghly (including Chinsura), Bhadreswar, Baidyabāti, Serampore, Kotrang and Uttarpārā. The eighth municipality, Arāmbāgh, is really a congeries of villages and has been constituted a municipality, as being the headquarters of a subdivision rather than a place with urban characteristics. The population of each of these towns, according to the census of 1911, is shown in the margin.

Arāmbāgh	...	8,048
Bhadreswar	...	24,353
Baidyabāti	...	20,516
Bānsberiā	...	6,108
Hooghly-*cum*-Chinsura		28,916
Kotrang ...	...	6,574
Serampore	...	49,594
Uttarpārā	..	7,373

Of the seven towns on the Hooghly, Bānsberiā and Hooghly are now decadent, having been supplanted as commercial centres by Calcutta and Howrah. Of the other five, Bhadreswar and Serampore are thriving towns, which are growing rapidly owing to their proximity to the metropolis and to the development

of jute mills and other industrial concerns Serampore is now the most important town in the district, having added 40 per cent. to its population between 1881 and 1891, 20 per cent in the next decade, and nearly 12 per cent. between 1901 and 1911. Bhadreswar, though barely a third of the size of Serampore, has of late expanded ever more rapidly, and has more than doubled its population since 1891. Baidyabāti is an important mart for vegetables and other garden produce, while Uttarpārā and Kotrang to the south are small quiet semi-suburban towns; the former is inhabited by a considerable number of *bhadralog*, *i.e.*, Hindus of the middle class, and the latter is a centre for the manufacture of tiles and bricks.

Behind and to the west of this riparian tracts lies the semi-urban area with a number of populous villages fringing the high banks of the Saraswatī from Magrāganj on the north to Chandītalā on the south. In spite of epidemics of malaria, the density in this tract has long been high ; and in recent years it has benefited from the establishment of mills in the adjoining riparian tract, which has converted localities which were formerly petty villages into thriving suburban towns. It has also benefited through the interior being opened up by the Howrah-Shiakhālā, Tārakeswar and Tribenī-Tārakeswar railway lines, while the general health has improved by the draining of marshes in the south and by the admission of a little water into the Saraswatī itself by a cut from the Kunti Nadī. The rest of the district, including Arāmbāgh, is more or less rural, containing, however, many populous villages.

According to the census of 1901, the proportion of the population (20 per cent.) living in towns is higher than in any other Bengal district, while the villages are also unusually large, for 51 per cent. have 500 to 2,000 inhabitants and only one-third (34 per cent.) contain less than 500.

LANGUAGE.

The dialect in common use is that known as Central Bengali or Metropolitan, which forms the basis of modern literary Bengali and is so called because it is the vernacular of the metropolitan districts, viz., Howrah, the 24-Parganās, Hooghly and Nadiā. The Muhammadans usually talk Bengali, but the better educated often use Urdū, though in a more or less corrupt form. West of the Dwārakeswar, the current speech is affected by the Rārhi dialect of Bankurā and Burdwān, the pronunciation being somewhat different, and the intonation crisper. The existence of European settlements in the district for centuries has left little mark on the vocabulary and practically none on the grammar.

The history of vernacular literature in this district can be traced as far back as Akbar's time, when Mādhabāchārya, the author of *Chandi*, flourished at Tribenī. Since then Hooghly has produced some notable writers, *e.g.*, in the British period, Rāmmohan Rāy, Piāri Chānd Mitra, Bhudeva Chandra Mukherji, Hem Chandra Banerji, Chandra Nāth Basu, and Akhay Chandra Sarkār. Several well known composers of songs have also been born in the district, *e.g.*, Auliā Manohar Dās, Rāmnidhi Gupta *alias* Nidhi Bābu, Sridhara Kathaka, Anthony Firingi, and Govinda Adhikāri. Literature.

Hindus at the census of 1901 numbered 861,116 or 82 per cent of the population, and Muhammadans 184,577 or 17·5 per cent. Members of other religions were few in number, viz., Animists (2,766), Christians (759), Brahmos (26), Jains (25), Buddhists (6) and Sikhs (4). The proportion of Hindus has increased slightly, being 78·23 per cent. in 1872, 81·25 in 1881, 81·50 in 1891 and 82·0 in 1901. On the other hand, the percentage of Muhammadans has decreased slightly, falling from 21·61 in 1872 to 18·64 in 1881, 17·89 in 1891 and 17·5 in 1901. RELIGIONS.

The animistic tribes, though they have few representatives, have been steadily increasing. In 1872 they were not enumerated separately; in 1881 only 37 Santāls were returned; and in 1891, when a more careful classification was made, 2,035 persons were returned as Santāls and 19 as members of other tribes. In 1901, Santāls had increased to 9,955, Oraons to 3,460, Bhumijes to 1,761 and Khairās to 1,530 A part of this increase may be due to better enumeration, but the bulk is undoubtedly caused by immigration. The Santāls congregate chiefly in thānas Dhaniākhāli, Panduā and Haripāl; the Bhumij in thāna Balāgarh; the Khairās in thāna Panduā. As there are nearly as many females as men among them, it may be presumed that they have settled permanently in those tracts. The case is different with the Oraons, who at the time of the census were found chiefly in thānas Serampore, Chanditalā and Singur. There was a marked disproportion between the sexes, viz., 213 females to 3,247 males, which goes to show that they were merely temporary immigrants who had come to work in the mills and on earthwork. The discrepancy between the number of aboriginals and the number of Animists is due to the fact that all the Bhumij and Khairās, and most of the Oraons and Santāls, were returned as Hindus and not Animists. Animists.

The Christian community in 1901 included 192 Europeans, 94 Eurasians and 473 native Christians, – a small number, considering the fact that Serampore was long the headquarters of the Baptist Christians.

missionaries, and that there were European settlements along the Hooghly for more than two centuries. The majority were residents of the towns of Serampore (466) and Hooghly (219); of the remainder, most were enumerated in the rural thāna of Panduā, where the Free Church of Scotland has a missionary centre at Mahānād. The majority of the Europeans were members of the Anglican communion; of the Eurasians, more than half were Roman Catholics; and of the native Christians, 193 were Baptists, 136 Presbyterians and 60 Roman Catholics The Eurasians are decreasing owing to migration to Calcutta, Howrah and Chandernagore.

The Baptist Mission maintains a college at Serampore and a training school for native pastors. The United Free Church Mission has a high English school attached to the mission house at Chinsura and another school on the hospital road, as well as a zanāna mission house in Hooghly. There are also four outstations, *viz.*, at Tribenī, at Inchura in thāna Balāgarh, at Sonātigri near Sultāngāchhā in thāna Polbā, and at Mahānad, where it keeps up a small dispensary and school. The Prior of Bāndel manages a school for Catholics, which is attended by about 75 boys.

Muhammadans. Sātgaon and subsequently Hooghly were long the headquarters of Mughal Governors; and many Muhammadans were consequently attracted to the district. Their descendants are now mostly found in the Hooghly subdivision, particularly in thānas Hooghly, Panduā, Balāgarh and Dhaniākhāli. A few also, who received grants of land, made their homes along the old Saraswatī in thāna Chandītalā and round Mandāran in thāna Goghāt, where their descendants are known as *aimādārs* (from *aimā*, a grant). At the census of 1901 the bulk of the Muhammadans were returned as Sheikhs, their number being 162,632, while there were 3,699 Pathāns and 2,732 Saiyads. A few were returned as Ajlāf or low-class (1,180), Bediyā or gipsies (578), Dhāwā or fishermen (1,499), Mallik or soldier's descendants (2,694); but more (6,079) continued to call themselves Jolāhā or weavers.

Sheikhs. The Sheikhs account for more than 88 per cent. of the total number of Muhammadans. They are found in all thānas, and it is believed that many of them are descendants of Hindu converts, who assumed this title in order to establish a claim to espectability.

Ashrāf. Among the Muhammadas of Hooghly there are a few Ashrāf or high class families. Those entitled to this designation are chiefly found at Panduā and Hooghly in the Sadar subdivision at Phurphurā, Sītāpur and Bandipur in the Serampore subdivision and at Mandāran in the Arāmbāgh subdivision. Marriages

between them and the Ajlāf or lower classes are not interdicted by religion, but, as a matter of practice, do not take place, unless the Ajlāf bridegroom happens to be rich or learned. The Ashrāf do not ordinarily sit or eat with the Ajlāf or engage in any profession or trade which is considered undignified or degrading, but tailoring is not despised.

Jolāhās. The Jolahās or weavers, and the Kabaris (Kunjrās) or vegetable-sellers, rank very low, and no Ashrāf will ordinarily marry with them. They follow several Hindu customs. They marry within their own respective castes, excommunicate members for social offences, which may, however, be atoned for by a feast given to their fellow castemen, and use cow-dung to plaster the floor, like Hindus. Jolāhās also join the Shiahs, and beat drums, in the Muharram procession.

Hindus. More than four-fifths of the population are Hindus, distributed among numerous castes and semi-Hinduized tribes. At the census of 1901, the following castes and tribes were returned as numbering more than 10,000:—Bāgdis, Vaishnavas, Bāuris, Brāhmans, Doms, Goālās, Kaibarttas, Kāmārs, Kāyasths, Keorās, Muchis, Nāpits, Sadgops, Tāntis and Telis.

Brāhmans. The Brāhmans number (in 1901) 72,906, excluding degraded Brāhmans such as Agradānis, Patits, or Daivajnas. Including the latter, the numerical strength of this caste is practically the same as it was 20 years before, being 76,271 in 1881 and 76,317 in 1901. A few immigrants have been attracted by the sanctity of the river Bhāgīrathī or by the prospects of employment in the various mills and factories, but more appear to have left the district to work in Calcutta, Howrah and other places. The Brāhmans of Hooghly belong mostly to the Rārhi sub-caste, so called from residence in the old territorial division of Rārh. The current tradition is that they are descended from five learned Brāhmans brought from Kanauj by King Adisur in the 11th century, because he found the local Brāhmans too ignorant to perform Vedic ceremonies. But this theory is doubtful, as in the following century Halāyudha, the Brāhman minister of Lakshmana Sena, stigmatized the Rārhiya Brāhmans as ignorant of Vedic rites.*

The most remarkable of their social customs is Kulīnism or the system of hypergamy. The origin of this system is described as follows in the *Kula-panjikās*, or chronicles of the genealogists. Dharāsura, king of Rārh, divided the Rārhi Brāhmans into three classes, viz., (1) Mukhya Kulīns or the best, (2)

* M. M. Chakravarti, *Sanskrit Literature during the Sena Rule*, J. A. B. S. 1906, p. 176.

Gauna Kulīns or the lower class, and (3) Srotriyas or the ordinary 'hearers.' The Gauna Kulīns were excluded from the high class of Kulīns by Lakshmana Sena, and, mixing with Srotriyas, were further subdivided into (*a*) Susiddha or highly approved, (*b*) Siddha or the approved, (*c*) Sādhya or capable of being approved, and (*d*) Ari or inimical. Of the original Kulīns, only fourteen *gāins* or headmen of villages were considered pure by king Ballāla Sena. Three of the fourteen Gauna Kulīns became Siddha, four Sādhya, and seven Ari; while the thirty-seven original *gāins* of Srotriyas were treated as Susiddha.

In course of time, during the Musalmān rule, when there was no longer a Hindu king to control the social system, great changes took place in their social organization. In the 16th century, Devībar Ghatak, an influential genealogist of Jessore, aided by the Hindu landlords, systematized several of the changes which had taken place among the Kulīns. The original Kulīn families were now subdivided into *Swabhāva* or originally pure, Bhanga or broken, and Bansaja or those born of ordinary families, *i.e.*, those who had lost all Kulīnism. These families were further brought under 36 *mels* or groups, named either after the clan ancestor, such as Sarvānandī or Gopāl Ghatakī, or after the clan village, such as Phuliyā or Khardah. The Kulīns were also restricted to marriage within their respective *mels*, thus forming endogamous groups; but they continued to be subject to the old rule of marriage outside their respective *gotras* and even *gāins*, a Mukherji giving his daughter not to another Mukherji but to some Chatterji or Banerji, subject to his not being a close relative. A Kulīn girl could thus marry only a Kulīn boy of her own *mel*; on the other hand, a Kulīn boy could marry not only a Kulīn girl of the same *mel*, but also a Srotriya girl. If he married a girl of a Bhanga or Bansaja family, he became a Bhanga, but the family into which he married would have an accession of dignity.†

The artificial restrictions in favour of a Kulīn bridegroom naturally gave rise to great difficulties in effecting the marriage of Kulīn girls and also of non-Kulīn Rārhi girls. The competition for Kulīn husbands on the part of the non-Kulīn classes was as strong as before, while the proportionate number of pure Kulīns had been reduced by the loss of those who had become Bhangas and Bansajas. The result was that polygamy came into fashion. It became popular with Kulīns because the accident of birth enabled them to earn a good income; it was accepted

† *Gauda Brāhmana*, by Mahima Chandra Majumdār, pp. 166-167, 173, 176, 181-2.

by the parents of the girls as offering the only means of complying with the requirements of their social code. Matrimony thus became a sort of profession, and the Kulīn husband did not have the trouble and expense of maintaining and looking after his wives, for they were generally left in their parents' homes after marriage.

With the spread of education and the growth of educated public opinion, the custom of polygamy has practically died out in West Bengal. The anxiety of parents to marry their daughters to Kulīns or Bhangas is still strong, but qualifications other than that of birth are now looked for, *e.g.*, education, ability, etc. The number of members of many *mels* has, however, fallen off, and as large sums are demanded and have to be paid for a suitable bridegroom, the marrige problem is a hard one for a parent unlucky enough to have a large family. Indirectly, the paucity of bridegrooms is having a good effect, for it is forcing up the marriageable age of girls, subject, however, to the pre-existing rule regarding puberty. The *mels* are also being slowly intermingled owing to the evasion of restrictions by educated Brāhmans leading a town life.

Numerically the Bāgdis are the strongest caste in the district, Bāgdis. and their number has been steadily rising, viz., from 134,115 in 1881 to 188,723 in 1901. This increase is due partly to the influx of Bāgdi coolies from outside, partly to the more complete inclusion of several sub-castes, many of whom were probably enumerated among other castes in previous censuses, and partly to the fecundity of Bāgdi women and the comparative ease with which outsiders are admitted into the caste. They congregate chiefly in the west, viz., in the Arāmbāgh subdivision and in the adjoining thānas of Kristanagar, Haripāl, Polbā and Dhaniākhāli. The name Bāgdi is said to be derived from the old territorial division of Bāgri. Their distribution tends to show that they migrated into this district from the west. This inference is corroborated by the fact that further east, *i.e.*, in Nadiā and the 24-Parganas, their social rank is low, while to the west they have a better status, *e.g.*, in Bānkurā a number are *sardār ghātwāls*, and in Mānbhūm some zamīndārs are believed to be Bāgdis by descent. The eastern movement also tends to Hinduize them more completely. For example, in Bānkurā, Mānbhūm and the northern Feudatory States of Orissa, Bāgdis practise both infant and adult marriage, and in the latter case sexual intercourse before marriage is tolerated. In Hooghly, on the other hand, infant marriage is the rule and adult marriage the exception; while east of the Bhāgīrathī the

Bāgdis assume complete ignorance of the custom of adult marriage. Divorce is less common in the east than in the west; while members of the Tentuliā section, chiefly found in Hooghly, do not allow widows to re-marry, do not take beef, and do not usually admit into their circle members of higher castes, as those further west do. Brāhmanical influence is traceable also in the period of mourning, which is 31 days among the Tentuliās and Kusmetias, as among other Sudras, but is 13 days among the Trayodasas (as their name signifies) and 11 days only among the Nodās, as in Orissa.

Socially the Tentuliās rank highest and then the Duliās; in this district, though not *jalācharaniya*, Ganges water can be taken from them, while their touch does not defile in the case of dry things or liquids, like oil and *ghī*. The lowest in the social scale are the Nodās, with whom the other sub-castes do not intermarry. Excepting the Nodās, who are generally fishmongers and Mānjhis or Dandamānjhis, who are usually boatmen and fishermen, the bulk of the sub-castes in this district work as landless labourers or are nomadic cultivators. Many Duliās, however, still carry *dulis* (palanquins) or catch fish; while many Tentuliās and Kasaikuliās work as masons or prepare lime for chewing with betel-leaf. A number of Tentuliās and Duliās are also employed as servants, especially in non-Brāhman houses. Mr. W. B. Oldham, formerly Collector of Burdwān, has surmised that the Bāgdis formed "the section of the Māl who accepted life and civilization in the cultivated country as serfs and co-religionists of the Aryans."

Kaibarttas. Next to the Bāgdis, the Kaibarttas are the most numerous caste in Hooghly. Their number has been gradually rising, viz., from 142,526 in 1881 to 156,886 in 1901. The main caste of eastern Midnapore, they have overflowed into the districts of Howrah and Hooghly on the west, and across the Bhāgīrathī river into the 24-Parganas, Nadiā and Murshidābād on the east. Naturally, therefore, the Kaibarttas congregate chiefly in the south of this district, viz., in thānas Khānākul and Arāmbāgh, Chanditalā, Haripāl and Singur, and many also have settled in the low riparian tract of Balāgarh thāna. The great majority returned themselves at the census of 1901 as Chāsi or cultivators, and only 5 per cent. as Jeliyā or fishers. Except a very few who call themselves Tutiyā from their cultivation of mulberry, the Chāsi Kaibarttas in Hooghly have no real endogamous groups, but are merely subdivided territorially into Uttar-Rárhi and Dakhin-Rārhi (north and south Rārh). Most follow Vaishnavism with Gosains as *Gurus* or spiritual guides. Generally

speaking, they are well off, and they have the reputation of being the thriftiest and most industrious of the cultivating classes.

The functional castes come in the following order numerically :—Sadgops or cultivating Goālās (59,417), Goālās proper or herdsmen (45,083), Telis or oilmen (35,498), Tāntis or weavers (25,219), Kāyasths or writers (23,610) and Muchis or cobblers. Functional castes.

The Kāyasths have comparatively few representatives in this district; and the census figures show a slow decrease from 25,484 in 1881 to 23,610 in 1901, a decrease that may be partially explained by deaths from malaria and emigration to Calcutta and Howrah. They belong mostly to the Dakhin-Rārhi sub-caste, and are found largely in the three head-quarters thānas. Kāyasths.

The Sadgops seem to be declining, as their number fell from 61,021 in 1881 to 59,417 in 1901. They are found chiefly in the westernmost thāna of Goghāt, and in the adjoining thānas of Arāmbāgh, Chandītalā and Dhaniākhāli. This distribution suggests a migration from the west or north-west; and even now they are proportionately most numerous along the western border from the Gopīballabpur thāna of Midnapore on the south to Bīrbhūm on the north; one group (the Kumār or Kuār) claims to be Kulīns, on the ground of being descended from the eight chiefs who ruled over Gopbhūm on the bank of the Ajai river. The Sadgops have two territorial endogamous groups, Purba-kuliyā and Paschim-kuliyā, *i.e.*, those on the east and west bank of the Bhāgīrathī; and most in the Hooghly district belong to the latter group. They are chiefly cultivators and are generally well-to-do. Sadgops.

The following is a brief account of the principal Hindu festivals beginning with the first month of the Bengali year, *i e.*, Baisākh (April-May), which has 30 or 31 days. New year's day is celebrated chiefly by tradesmen, who now close their old accounts and open new ledgers. On this day bathing in the Ganges, especially at Tribenī, is considered very auspicious. The entire month of Baisākh is looked upon as a favourable time for good deeds and for the performance of religious duties. While it lasts, a large number of people, mostly women, come from various parts of the Province to pour water over the lingam of Siva at Chinsura, called Shāndeswar. HINDU FESTIVALS.

The next month is Jyaishtha (31 or 32 days), which corresponds to the latter end of May and the first part of June. In this month the god Jagannāth and the Ganges are specially worshipped. On the tenth day of the bright half of the month the banks of the Hooghly are lined with thousands of people, who perform their ablutions in its sacred water, worshipping

the Ganges. In this month also almost every Hindu household observes a social ceremony called the Shashthī *Pūjā* (better known in Bengal as Jāmāi Shashthī), when sons-in-law are hospitably entertained by their mothers-in-law and presented with flowers and clothes. On the full-moon day the bathing festival of Jagannāth is celebrated with special pomp at Māhesh.

In Ashār (June-July) the only important religious festival is the Rath Jātrā or Car Festival, with the Ultā-rath marking the return of the car; this festival is celebrated in Māhesh and Ballabhpur. In Srāban (July-August) the only festival of any importance is the Jhulan Jātrā, the rocking festival. It is so called because the image of Krishna is seated on a throne (generally made of wood), which is suspended by ropes from the ceiling, and rocked to and fro like a child in its cradle. Another religious festival which takes place in this month is the worship of Manasā Devī, the goddess of snakes, which is chiefly observed in the villages. In Bhādra (August-September) the only festival worthy of notice is the Janmāshtamī (followed the next day by Nandotshab), the anniversary of the birth of Krishna. This is generally observed by Vaishnavas, and by boys reading at *pāthsālās*, and is presided over by *guru-mahāsayas* of the old school.

The next month Aswin (September-October) is a highly auspicious month with the Hindus, as the Durgā Pūjā takes place in it. On the full-moon, which immediately follows the Durgā Pūjā, the festival of Lakshmī, the goddess of prosperity, is celebrated. In Kārttik (October-November) several important religious festivals take place, viz., Shyāmā Pūja, Jagaddhātrī Pūjā, Kārttik Pūjā and Rāsh Jātrā. In this month also a social festival called Bhrātri Dwitīyā takes place. No important festival is celebrated in the month of Agrahāyan (November-December). In Paus (December-January) the Uttarāyan festival takes place at Tribenī. On the last day of the month large numbers of pilgrims, coming from different parts of the Province, bathe in the Ganges. On this occasion a fair is held at Tribenī, and Hindu families prepare and eat various kinds of cakes and generally enjoy themselves. In the month of Māgh (January-February) the worship of Saraswatī (goddess of learning) takes place, pens, ink and books being laid aside for the time and worshipped. In Phālgun (February-March) the most important festivals are the Sivarātrī and the Dol or Holī festival, which are too well known to call for description. A large *melā* is held at Tārakeswar in connection with the Sivarātrī festival.

In Chaitra (March-April), the last month of the Bengali year, the great swinging festival called Charak Pūjā, takes place.

It is observed on the last day of the month, corresponding at present to 13th April, and is celebrated with some pomp, more particularly at Tārakeswar. At Chinsura the festival is observed in front of the temple of Shāndeswar and is followed by a fair, which lasts the whole of the next month. Besides these fixed festivals, eclipses of the moon and sun are considered auspicious. During eclipses large numbers of Hindus bathe in the Ganges and old cooking pots are discarded, being replaced by new.

PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE.

The principal places of pilgrimage in the district are Tribenī, Māhesh, Ballabhpur and Tārakeswar. The principal Hindu festivals celebrated at Tribenī are :—(1) Makar Sankrānti and Uttarāyan held on the last day of Paus and the first day of the succeeding month of Māgh. A *melā* or fair is held at Tribenī on the occasion of this festival, which usually lasts for three days and is attended by several thousand persons. (2) Vishnupadi Sankrānti, held in honour of the sun at the time of the vernal equinox, on the last day of the Hindu month of Māgh. The principal religious rite consists in bathing. (3) Bārunī, the great bathing festival of Bengal, held in the month of Chaitra in honour of Baruna, the god of the waters. The fair and religious ceremonies only last one day. (4) Dasaharā, held within the Hindu month of Jyaishtha in honour of the goddess Gangā. The festival lasts one day. (5) Kārttik Pūjā, on the last day of the month of the same name, is in honour of the god Kārttikeya, the son of the goddess Durgā. A fair is held at Bānsberiā near Tribenī, and the festival lasts for one day only.

Two important festivals connected with the god Jagannāth are held at Māhesh and Ballabhpur. The first is the Snān Jātrā, or bathing festival of Jagannāth, which takes place at the full moon of the month of Jyaishtha. It only lasts one day, but is attended by a large concourse of people from the neighbouring villages and from Calcutta. The ceremony simply consists in bringing the god out of his temple on to a platform, and bathing him in the presence of the multitude, who make offerings to the deity. Sixteen days after the bathing festival, the Rath Jātrā or Car Festival takes place. The god is again brought out of his temple at Māhesh, placed on a huge car, and dragged for a distance of about a mile to the village of Ballabhpur, where he is placed in the temple of another god, Rādhāballabh. After the lapse of eight days, the Ultā-rath or return journey takes place, the god being escorted back to his temple in

Māhesh at the time of the festival. People combine business with pleasure; and long lines of booths are constructed, in which a brisk trade is carried on in cloth and trinkets, such as looking-glasses, combs, boxes, caps, mats, hookahs, children's toys, etc. On the Sunday which falls within the 9 days of the festival a river fête used to be held; for about a mile opposite to Ballabhpur the river was crowded with boats, the occupants of which engaged in singing, music, dancing and other diversions. Although the fair lasts for nine days, the religious ceremonial is confined to the first day, on which the idol is taken to Ballabhpur, and the ninth day, on which it is conveyed back to Māhesh. On these days the crowd is immense, and on some occasions it is estimated to amount to a hundred thousand persons.

The shrine at Tārakeswar is another sacred place, to which pilgrims flock at all times of the year, principally for the fulfilment of vows on recovery from sickness. Two large religious gatherings are held every year for the worship of Siva, the deity of the temple. The first of them is the Sivarātrī, held in February, on the fourteenth day after the full moon in the month of Phālgun, a day specially sacred to Siva. The three essential observances of the Sivarātrī are fasting by night and day, holding a vigil, and worshipping the lingam during the night. The second important religious festival held at the Tārakeswar temple is the Chaitra Sankrānti, on the last day of the Hindu month of Chaitra and of the Bengali year, which is also the day of the swinging festival. The temple is also visited during the whole of the month of Chaitra by a large number of persons from the surrounding neighbourhood, within a circuit of 40 or 50 miles. These persons generally belong to the lower castes, who come to perform some penance, or to lead an ascetic life for a time, in fulfilment of a vow made to Siva in time of sickness or in danger, or in order to gain a reputation for piety. For 10 days the devotees chasten the flesh by fasting, etc. Formerly, during the last few days of this period of penance, which ends with the Chaitra Sankrānti, self-inflicted tortures were added to the ordinary penance. Numbers of Sannyāsis and other Sivite ascetics voluntarily subjected themselves to torture by walking upon live embers, throwing themselves down from a height, piercing their body and tongue with pincers, etc.; concluding on the last day (that of the Chaitra Sankrānti) with swinging themselves from a high pole by means of hooks pierced through the fleshy muscles on both sides of the spine. These and other practices of the sort are now prohibited

by Government; and the swinging festival of the present day is a very harmless affair, compared to what it used to be, the votaries now being merely suspended by a belt.

The principal Muhammadan festivals observed in the district of Hooghly, as in other Muhammadan places, are (1) the two *Ids*, (2) the *Shab-i-Barāt*, (3) the *Fatihā Dowāzdaham*, and (4) the *Muharram*. These are prescribed either by the *Korān* or the *Hādis* (the traditions), and the modes of celebrating them are more or less uniform. MUHAMMADAN FESTIVALS.

The *Ids* are (*a*) the *Id-ul-Fitr* (or the lesser *Bairām* as it is called in Turkey) and (*b*) the *Id-uz-Zohā* (or the greater *Bairām*). The *Id-ul-Fitr* begins on the 1st Shawal (the tenth month), and is the feast with which Muhammadans break the fast of Ramzān. The month of Ramzān has a peculiar sanctity in the calendar of Islām, as during this month the Prophet Muhammad received the revelations brought down from heaven by the Angel Gabriel. The words of the *Korān* are :—"Ye shall fast in the month of Ramzān, in which the *Korān* was sent down from heaven. Therefore let him among you who shall be present in this month, fast; but he who shall be sick or on a journey, shall fast the like numbers of other days." Again—"Those who can keep it, and do not, must redeem their neglect by maintaining a poor man." Musalmāns are therefore bound—subject to exceptions in the case of travellers and sick persons—to fast during the whole of this month, from the day of the appearance of the new moon till the appearance of the next new moon. During this period they must abstain from eating, drinking and intercourse with women, from daylight till sunset; after sunset they may break their fast. During this month special religious services are held in the mosques at Hooghly at the time of *Isha* (nightly prayer), and a large number of beggars are daily fed at the Imāmbārā.

The *Id-ul-Fitr* lasts three days. On the morning of the first day prayers are offered up in the mosques, *Idgahs*, and the Imāmbārā. It is an impressive sight to see at this time the orderly phalanx of Musalmāns bent in prayer on the rough grey quadrangle of the Saiyad Chānd mosque, on the polished marble slabs of the Imāmbārā, or on the grassy earth in front of an *Idgah*—all facing towards the *Jabah* to the west. Prayer being over, the *Khutbā* is recited, and at its close, prayers are offered up for the prosperity of Islām, the preservation of peace and unity, etc. After this, the congregation embrace one another and then depart to their homes. For three days together demonstrations ... are freely distributed; friends

go round visiting each other; milk, dates and other confections are distributed amongst them.

The *Id-uz-zohā*, popularly called the *Bakr-Id*, is the feast of the sacrifice, and begins on the tenth of the month of Zil-hajja (the twelfth month). Prayers, followed by the recital of the *Khutbā*, are offered up in the Imāmbārā, the Saiyad Chānd and other mosques, and sheep, goats, and kine are sacrificed The origin of this festival is traced to the sacrifice of a ram in place of Ismāil. According to the *Korān*, Abraham was commanded in a dream to sacrifice his beloved son Ismāil, but when he had laid him prostrate on his face ready for sacrifice, a ram appeared and was substituted as a victim.

Shab-i-Barāt on the 14th Shābān (the eighth month), is another important Muhammadan festival. During the daytime alms are distributed, prayers offered up, and presents in the shape of *halwā*, bread and other dainties sent to friends: at night fire-works are let off. The tradition regarding the origin of this festival is that the Prophet, having had one of his teeth knocked out by a stone slung at him in a battle, was given *halwā* to eat by his daughter Fātimā.

Fatihā-Dowāzdaham is the anniversary of the Prophet's death and occurs on the 12th Rabi-ul-Awal (the third month). It is a day of mourning in the Moslem world. *Maulud sharifs* (hymns and narratives chronicling the Prophet's career) are recited in the houses of most of the well-to-do Moslems at Hooghly, and sweets are generally distributed among those who attend.

The *Muharram* (the first month) is a period of deep mourning commemorating 'the life and death struggle between Hasan and Husain, the sons of Fātimā and grandsons of the Prophet, on one side, and Yezid, son of Moyāviā, on the other, which culminated in the slaughter of the scions of the *Alel-ul-Bait* (or Prophet's family) on the bloody battlefield of Karbelā.' The Sunnis observe the *Muharram* as a period of silent mourning, offer up prayers and distribute alms to the poor and helpless. The Shiahs have more open demonstrations of sorrow.

At Hooghly the *Muharram* is celebrated with unusual pomp and ceremony owing to the existence of the Shiāh Imāmbārā of Hāji Muhammad Mohsin. Here the *Marsiā* or funeral service is held every night, and *pilāo*, *kormā*, etc., are daily distributed among the Muhammadan residents of Hooghly. On the 7th and 8th days of the *Muharram* long processions, with horses, elephants, banners and flags, start from the Imambārā. On the 9th night (*Kutl-ki-rāt*, or the night of slaughter) there is another procession, bearing scores of *tāziās*, flags, banners and torches, and headed by the

priests of the Imâmbārā, who pause at every turn, reciting the funeral hymns and beating their breasts. On the 10th day (*Ashura*), the day on which the burial of the martyrs took place, a similar procession starts from the Imâmbārā and consigns the effigy of Husain to the tank at Karbelā.

Besides the usual festivals which are prescribed by the *Korān* or the traditions, there are some religious fairs peculiar to the Muhammadans in the Hooghly district, held in connection with the shrines at Panduā and Tribenī. At Pandua there is a shrine of a Muhammadan saint named Shāh Sufi Sultān, where fairs are held every year in the months of Paus, Phālgun and Chait. On the west side of the shrine there is a sacred tank called Pīr Pukhur. Men and women resort to this tank on the 29th Paus, stay there the whole night, and commence bathing in it at 3 A.M. There is an alligator in the tank, called Kālā Khān, to which women make votive offerings in the hope of being blessed with issue Bathing over, the pilgrims wend their way back to the shrine *via* Mandirtalā, scattering rice, cowries, etc , on the way. Some sit down along the route. and rēcite the *Korān* and religious hymns. Another fair takes place towards the end of Paush on the Uttarāyan Sankrānti (a Hindu festival) and lasts 8 or 10 days; it is well attended, and many shopkeepers come to it from adjoining places. The fair which is held in Phālgun lasts only two or three days, and is not so well attended as the Paush fair. The fair which is held in Chait is better attended than the Phālgun fair, but lasts only five or six days. Pilgrims generally carry away with them a pitcher of water drawn from the Pīr Pukhur, which they scrupulously preserve.

At Tribeni the shrine of Shāh Jafar Khān Ghāzi is said to have been in existence for 700 years. According to tradition, he was a warrior saint, who, on coming to Shāhpur, waged war with, and defeated, the Hindu Rājā of Mahānād. Two fairs take place at Tribenī, one in the beginning of Māgh and the other during the Dol Jātrā . The fair which takes place in Māgh lasts one day, and that held during the Dol Jātrā lasts four or five days Muhammadan pilgrims sacrifice fowls, goats, etc., during both these fairs.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

AUGUSTINIANS.

AMONG the first Christian missionaries in the district were Augustinian friars, who came from Goa to the Portuguese settlement at Hooghly in the second half of the 16th century and were the principal missionary body in Bengal. According to tradition, a Portuguese captain named Tavares, who was a favourite of the tolerant Emperor Akbar, succeeded in inducing him to allow the public preaching of the Christian faith and the erection of Christian churches. In 1599 a church was built at Bandel, a mile away from the Portuguese factory, and also a monastery, which became the headquarters of the Augustinian missionaries. The success of their labours was attested and keenly resented by the Muhammadans. The author of the *Bādshāhnāmā*, writing in the first half of the 17th century, complained that the Europeans infected the inhabitants round Hooghly with the Nazarene teaching, some by force and more by hope of gain. Khāfi Khān again (*circa* 1720) wrote bitterly that, of all the odious practices of the Portuguese, the most odious was the way in which they took any orphans there might be in their settlements and, whether Brāhmans or Saiyads, made them Christians and slaves. It seems at least certain that the Portuguese of Hooghly made their slaves turn Christians, for we have it on the authority of Bernier that they regularly bought up slaves from the pirates of the Bay, who "boast, the infamous scoundrels, that they make more Christians in a twelve-month than all the missionaries of the Indies do in ten years."

The resentment of the Emperor Shāh Jahān at this proselytizing is said to have been one of the reasons for the attack on Hooghly in 1632. After its fall, the Christian captives were transported to Agra and exposed to the bitter persecution mentioned in the last chapter. "Even the children, priests and monks shared the universal doom....Some of the monks, however, remained faithful to their creed, and were conveyed to Goa and other Portuguese settlements by the kind exertions of the Jesuit and other missionaries at Agra, who, notwithstanding all this calamity, continued in their dwelling and were enabled to

accomplish their benevolent purpose by the powerful aid of money and the warm intercession of their friends."* Recent researches have shown that two clerics, Father Emmanuel d'Anhaya and Father Emmanuel Garcia, died in prison at Agra in 1633 and 1634, "*pela fe*," *i.e.*, for the faith, and two priests followed them to the grave in 1634. The two clerics must have been among the Augustinian friars who remained faithful, and the place where they were buried is still called the Martyrs' Chapel.† The Prior of Hooghly (Father Antonio da Cristo), however, is said to have remained in prison at Agra till 1640, when an Augustinian friar, Father Manrique, procured his release.‡ The Portuguese were allowed to re-enter Hooghly in 1633 and, according to the account quoted in the preceding chapter, the Emperor Shāh Jahān was so deeply impressed by the miraculous preservation of Father John da Cruz, that he not only permitted them to rebuild the church at Bandel, but also gave it an endowment of 777 *bighās*. The church, which had been destroyed during the sack of Hooghly, was rebuilt by a pious Portuguese, named Gomez de Soto, in 1660. Near this church stood the church of Misericordia, to which an orphanage was attached; and there was also a nunnery, at which merchants and others left their daughters to be educated during their absence from home.

Later accounts pourtray the Augustinian friars in an unfavourable light. For instance, about fifty years after the restoration of the church, Alexander Hamilton remarked, in bluff sailor fashion:— "The Bandel, at present deals in no sort of commodities but what are in request at the court of Venus, and they have a church where the owners of such goods and merchandise are to be met with; and the buyer may be conducted to proper shops, where the commodities may be seen and felt, and a priest to be security for the soundness of the goods." After 1756, that year of trouble for Hooghly, the establishment declined. "The hospice of Bāndel," wrote Georgi in 1760, "was formerly celebrated and distinguished, not so much for the size of its buildings as for the number of religious men and the magnificence of its public schools, but in consequence of the calamities of the times it is almost destitute of inhabitants except a few "§ Subsequently, however, it appears to have recovered, for in 1797 the Prior felt himself strong enough to claim independent civil and criminal jurisdiction, except in cases of

* Bernier's Travels.

† The Revd. H. Hosten, S.J., *Jesuit Missionaries in Northern India* (1906), p. 22.

‡ H.G. Keene, *Sketch of the History of Hindostan* (1885), pp. 198-99; Revd. H. Hosten, J.H.S.B., 1910, pp. 282-3.

§ *The Portuguese in North India*, Calcutta Review, Vol. V, 1846.

murder, over all the ryots in the monastery lands. In support of his claim, he quoted the terms of a *pharmān* of 1645 confirming the grant of 1633, and also a letter of 1787 prohibiting the Collector from exercising civil and criminal jurisdiction over the inhabitants of Bandel; but Government disallowed the claim.*

The last Prior of the monastery, Father Joseph Gomez, died in 1869, and the church is now in charge of a parish priest, who retains the title of Prior of Bandel. Out of the 777 *bighās* granted by Shāh Jahān, some 380 *bighas* still constitute an endowment of the church and yield a small rental.

The Prior of Bandel occupies a somewhat unique position in Bengal in being under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Mailapur or Meliapur (St. Thomé) in Madras. This connection with Mailapur embodies ecclesiastical history. Until the establishment, in 1886, of the new Catholic hierarchy for India, the Roman Catholic missions were governed by vicars and prefects-apostolic, all dependent on the Congregation *de propaganda fide* at Rome. Within the territories assigned to ten of these vicars-apostolic, the Archbishop of Goa (appointed by the King of Portugal) had an "extraordinary jurisdiction" over a certain number of persons and churches outside his diocese in various parts of India. The independent jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Goa had its origin in the right of patronage (*padroado*) over bishoprics and benefices in the East, which was granted by the Popes to the Portuguese Crown. On the ruin of the Portuguese power in India, the King of Portugal was no longer in a position to exercise his patronage; and eventually, in 1838, as all the *padroado* bishoprics had been vacant for many years, Gregory XVI suppressed the sees of Cochin, Cranganore and Mailapur, annexed their territories to the Vicariates-apostolic created by him or his predecessors, and limited the Goanese jurisdiction to Portuguese possessions. The Indo-Portuguese clergy as a body refused to abide by these orders, and a schism ensued. Eventually, in 1866, a Concordat was issued by which the *padroado* was limited to one ecclesiastical province, consisting of the metropolitan see of Goa and three suffragan sees (Damān, Cochin and Mailapur), the Pope being free to make arrangements for the rest of India.†

JESUITS. The Jesuits also appear to have come to Hooghly before the close of the 16th centuary. According to Fathers Besse and Hosten, two Jesuits came to Bengal in 1576 and insisted on the Portuguese traders refunding to the Emperor Akbar certain sums due for anchorage and taxes of which they had defrauded

* Toynbee's *Sketch of the Administration of Hooghly*, p. 6.
† W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Empire* (1892), pp. 306-9.

the exchequer. But through the influence of Pedro Tavares, the Captain of Hooghly, then (1578) at Fatehpur Sikri, all arrears were remitted. The Fathers' conscientious scruples and Pedro Tavares' petition favourably impressed the Emperor, and led eventually to the first Jesuit Mission at Fatehpur Sikri in 1580. The name of only one of these Fathers in Bengal has been preserved, Father Anthony Vaz.* Subsequently, we find that Hooghly was visited in 1598 by two priests, Fernandez and Josa, who were sent to Bengal by Pementa, a Jesuit visitor at Goa. Fernandez subsequently went to Chittagong, where he was mutilated and killed in 1602, while Josa was sent on a mission to the Sundarbans. By 1603 Jesuits had at least two stations in Bengal—one presumably at Hooghly and the other at Chittagong†—and in 1620 they established a branch of their Hooghly mission at Patna. According to the *Litterae Annuae* of Cochin, dated December 1620, the Nawāb of Patna "having heard that some Portuguese merchants had recently arrived in his territory, sent for them and received them with the utmost kindness, going so far as to send them his own elephant and horses caparisoned according to their custom. He likewise gave orders that every day as many horses as there were Portuguese should be held in readiness. The Portuguese were so surprised at these marks of honour that they soon returned with presents, to show their gratitude and enter into friendship with him. He asked them whether there were Fathers of the Society in Bengal; and, on their answering that there were to be found some dispersed in several places throughout the country, he wrote a letter to the Superior requesting him to come and see him, as he had important affairs to settle with him. He offered him every means to alleviate the hardships of the journey and remove the difficulties in the way, volunteering to defray all the expenses for the building of a church and the maintenance of the Father who would be left in charge of it. The Nawāb also wrote to 'the Captain-General of that places' and to two of the principal inhabitants, asking them to go and see the Father and prevail upon him to comply with the request. These and other similar reasons finally decided the Father to undertake the journey, which he accomplished in sixteen days."‡ The Nawāb subsequently confessed secretly that he was a Christian, assigned

* The Revds. L. Besse, S.J., and H. Hosten, S.J., *List of Portuguese Jesuit Missionaries in Bengal and Burma*, J. A. S. B., February 1911.

† The Annual Letter for 1603, dated 15th January 1604, giving a list of Jesuit houses in Asia, mentions "Residencias de Bengala." *Marsden Mss.* Revd. J. Hosten, S.J., J.A.S.B., 1910, p. 444.

‡ *Foundation of the Jesuit Mission of Patna*, "Catholic Herald," 22nd August 1906.

the priest a house for his residence, and gave a grant for the building of a church.

The "Captain-General" was the Rector of the College of Hooghly, and the Father who visited him was Simon Figueredo, whom we find afterwards (in 1623) stationed at the College at Hooghly. The Nawāb was Mukarrab Khān, who proved a good patron to Hughes and Parker when they endeavoured to establish a factory at Patna in the same year; but Figueredo suspected that he only kept a priest in order to bring Portuguese merchants to the city.* Three of the Portuguese priests died of the 'plague' at Hooghly in 1626; and next year a lay brother, Bartolomeo Fontebona, one of the early missionaries sent by the Jesuits to Tibet, also died there. According to one account, two of the daughters of Nur Jahān, having become Christians, took up their abode with the Jesuits in the Portuguese settlement of Hooghly.† A few years later, in 1632, when the Mughals sacked Hooghly in, the College of the Jesuits was destroyed.* During the siege one of the Fathers was cut down with a scimitar; another was shot dead with arrows, and Father Da Cruz was wounded in the back with a scimitar, but recovered in a village near Hooghly‡. After 1632 the history of the Portuguese Jesuits is almost a complete blank.

The French Jesuits were also established for about a century at Chandernagore, where they worked as parochial clergy for the factory (*c*. 1693-1790). Mention is made in 1723 of their having a College at Bandel,§ and we find that in 1753 they had a hospital and orphanage at Chandernagore. Their church and house were pulled down in 1756, when the Governor, Renault, was strengthening the defences of Fort Orleans.‖

CAPUCHINS. The Capuchins also made Chandernagore their headquarters for some time. It was, in fact, the *point d'appui* for their missions to Tibet after 1703, when the Prefecture of Tibet and the adjoining countries was created and entrusted to them. They first established themselves at Chandernagore in that year, and then set up a branch mission at Patna, and in 1705 they opened a station at Pātan in Nepāl. A second expedition was sent out in 1707 under the Prefect Dominic of Fano, who succeeded in penetrating to Lhāsa with a few companions; but by 1709 the little band was reduced to the verge of starvation. The mission

* H. Hosten, *Jesuit Missionaries in Northern India*, pp. 18, 19, 21.

† H. G. Keene, *Sketch of the History of Hindustan* (1885), p. 195.

‡ L. Besse, and H. Hosten, *List of Portuguese Jesuit Missionaries*, J. A. S. B., February 1911.

§ *The Portuguese in North India*, Calcutta Review, Vol V, 1846, p. 260.

‖ *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol II. pp. 345, 374.

was abandoned in 1711, the missionaries returning from both Tibet and Nepāl and concentrating at Chandernagore. They did not, however, give up hope of re-establishing themselves in Tibet. Dominic of Fano himself went to Rome and pleaded their cause, being supported by the Bishop of Mailapur. It was decided to revive the mission to Tibet and twelve priests were allotted to it, four of whom were to be stationed in Lhāsa, and two each in Patna, Nepāl, "Drogn-gne" in the province of Takpo in Tibet, and Chandernagore. Dominic of Fano returned in 1714, bringing with him a decree from the Pope, Clement XI, drawn up in his name as "Prefect of the Tibet Mission," and granting his request "to erect upon the mission station and settlement of Chandernagore an oratory or small church."* The church built under this authority is believed to be the present chapel of the Convent of the Immaculate Conception, which has the date 1720 inscribed on its door, the Convent being originally a foundling hospital established by the Capuchins.

The Tibetan mission practically collapsed in 1745, when the heroic Horace of Penna left Lhāsa, dying broken-hearted at Pātan in Nepāl six weeks later. In Nepāl, however, it lingered till 1768, and throughout these years the Capuchins remained in residence at Chandernagore. Here fourteen of the mission died in the 18th century, the first being Brother Jacob of Breno, who with Horace of Penna was a member of the third expedition of 1712, and the last being Angelus de Carglio and Ludovic de Citta de Castello (died 1799) of the 25th expedition of 1790†. The Tibet mission finally ended in 1845, when the Vicariate Apostolic of Patna was created and entrusted to the Capuchins.

THE FIRST CHAPLAIN AT HOOGHLY.

The first Protestant minister in the district was the Revd. John Evans, a Welshman, who had graduated at Jesus College, Oxford. He was sent out to minister to the English employés at the Hooghly factory, where he arrived in 1678. There he set to work to have a chapel set aside for religious worship, and one is found in use in 1679. With Streynsham Master he drew up a set of rules for the factors in order to ensure godly and quiet living. These rules were fairly comprehensive. Anyone guilty of profane swearing was to pay a fine of twelvepence for each oath; the same penalty was fixed for lying; any Protestant in the Company's house neglecting to attend public prayers morning and evening without lawful excuse had to pay the same amount or be confined a whole week within the house; the

* G. Sandberg, *The Exploration of Tibet* (1904), pp. 32, 34, 36, 37; Sir Thomas Holdich, *Tibet the Mysterious*, p. 76.

† *Catholic Directory for the Archdiocese of Agra for 1907*, pp. 182—85.

irreclaimable were to be deported to Madras, there to receive condign punishment. Evans left Hooghly with Charnock, when it was abandoned in 1686.*

CHAPLAINS AT CHINSURA.

The first European Protestant missionary in the district was Zachariah Kiernander, a Swede, who came to Calcutta in 1758. After a long ministry there, his property, the mission church and school were seized by the Sheriff in 1787 in satisfaction of debts, and Kiernander sought refuge under the Danish flag at Serampore and then retired to Chinsura. There he received a cordial welcome from the Dutch Governor, Titsingh, who appointed him Chaplain on a salary of Rs. 50 a month. There was at the time no Chaplain, but only a reader who every Sunday read a sermon and the Dutch psalms. The Dutch had, it is true, applied to Tranquebar for a missionary in 1732, but at that time there was no one available. At Chinsura Kiernander was visited in 1794 by Dr. Carey, who recorded that the ardour he manifested for the conversion of the heathen was very animating and that he himself derived the highest encouragement from his exhortations. In 1795 Chinsura was taken by the English, and Kiernander became a prisoner of war. He was, however, allowed his liberty, and the salary given him by the Dutch was continued by Mr. Commissioner Birch during the period of English rule. But he was growing weaker and more infirm. Next year, being unable to discharge the duties of his office—he was now 85 years of age,—he resigned it and left Chinsura altogether. He still, however, came there occasionally from Calcutta, and during these visits baptized and preached. An entry in his diary shows that in 1798 he baptized Peter Theodorus Gerhardus Overbeck, whose tombstone in the Dutch cemetery bears a touching inscription put up by his father (possibly the last Dutch Governor).† In 1798, the first agent of the London Missionary Society (instituted in 1796) arrived at Chinsura. This was the Revd Nathaniel Forsyth, who died in 1816, and is described on his tomb 'as the first faithful and zealous Protestant minister in Chinsura.' The epitaph reads strangely, considering the fact that his predecessor was Kiernander.

SERAMPORE MISSION.

The first organized mission established in the district for spreading Christianity among the natives was that known as the Serampore Mission. The Baptist Missionary Society was formed in 1792, and next year sent its first missionaries to Bengal. These were William Carey, who started life as a shoemaker—or, as he

* H. B. Hyde, *Parochial Annals of Bengal*, pp. 3—14.

† *The First Protestant Missionary to Bengal*, Calcutta Review, 1847, pp. 151, 177-8, 183.

humbly said, 'only a cobbler'—and John Thomas, who had been a ship's surgeon. They embarked in a Danish vessel and landed in Calcutta in November 1793, but after being a month there were reduced to such straits, that they had to seek a cheaper locality. Bandel was fixed upon, and here Carey met Kiernander. But Bandel was ill-suited for Carey's plan of missionary labour. "It afforded him no opportunity of accommodating his habits of life to native economy, which he had been led to consider the most effectual mode of obtaining access to the people." The two men, therefore, left the place and returned to Calcutta. They were again, however, compelled to leave by poverty. Thomas accepted the management of one of Mr. Udny's indigo factories in Mâlda, and Carey, after staying a short time at Husainābād in the Sundarbans, undertook the management of another in 1794.

In October 1799 a fresh band of Baptist missionaries, viz., William Ward, Joshua Marshman, Mr. Brunsdon and Mr. Grant, arrived at Serampore in an American vessel with a letter of introduction to the Governor, Colonel Bie, from the Danish Consulate in London. They were afraid of being deported if they landed at Calcutta, for no Europeans were allowed to settle without a license, and they, therefore, came straight to Serampore. This expedient at first seemed to have failed, for their arrival was reported and the commander of the vessel informed that his vessel would not be allowed to enter the port and discharge cargo, unless his four passengers undertook to return to England at once. Ward and Brunsdon at once left for Calcutta to plead their cause in person, and found that one of the papers had announced the arrival of four Papist missionaries, owing either to a misprint or to ignorance of the Baptist denomination. They were, therefore, regarded as French spies, for at that time it was believed that emissaries of Buonaparte were travelling about in the disguise of Roman Catholic priests. The Baptists appealed to the Revd. David Brown, a good friend to missionaries, and he interceded for them with the Governor-General, Lord Wellesley. The embargo on the vessel was withdrawn, but all Mr. Brown's efforts to obtain permission for them to settle in British territory were unavailing. They were, therefore, obliged to abandon the idea of going up-country to join Carey, and decided to make their headquarters at Serampore. This decision was largely due to the kindness of Colonel Bie, who offered them the protection of the Danish crown and the privileges of Danish citizenship, and also permission to open a school, set up a press and print the Scriptures.

Here Carey joined them in January 1800, bringing with him a printing press, which Mr. Udny had presented to the Mission.

Their first years at Serampore were not without trouble. Mr. Grant had died within a month of landing; Mr. Fountain, who had worked with Carey at Mālda and joined him at Serampore, died next year (1800), and Mr. Brunsdon the year after. Mrs. Carey had lost her reason in 1794 through grief at the death of one of her children. She was now hopelessly insane, and in 1800 Thomas also went mad with excitement at the first conversion made. The baptism of the first convert, Krishna Chandra Pāl, was consequently a painful scene, for "Thomas, who was confined to his couch, made the air resound with his blasphemous ravings; and Mrs. Carey, shut up in her own room on the opposite side of the path, poured forth the most painful shrieks." In spite of these misfortunes, the three survivors, Carey, Ward and Marshman, steadily laboured on "in the cause of religion and humanity," and were ably seconded by Mrs. Marshman, "the first woman missionary to women," who opened schools for girls and established a native female education society. Their great work can only be briefly sketched here. The work of Carey's life was the translation of the Scriptures into the languages of India, and before he died he had published the Bible in Sanskrit, Persian, Hindustāni, Bengali, Marāthi, Oriyā, Telugu, Pashtu, Punjābi, Gujarāti, Hindī and other vernaculars, besides publishing dictionaries and grammars in various Indian languages. He also founded an agricultural society and established a botanic garden. Ward preached, chiefly in Bengali, superintended the vast business of the press which they set up, and left a monumental work on Hindu religion and customs. Dr. Marshman preached in English and Bengali, was manager of a number of branch missions, conducted the correspondence of the Mission—was in fact its Foreign Secretary.

A few features of the Serampore missionaries' work call for special notice. The first is the way in which they endeavoured to bring Christianity home to the natives of India by publishing the Scriptures and preaching themselves in the vernacular. Even Kiernander—devoted missionary though he was—never acquired an adequate knowledge of Hindustāni or Bengali, and to the day of his death was unable to converse in them. Simultaneously with this plan of translations, Carey and his two associates formed the design of establishing subordinate missionary stations in Bengal. After many obstacles the plan succeeded; and as means became more plentiful, the system was extended, until the

Serampore missionaries became the central directing authority of, sixteen missions in different parts of Eastern and Northern India. A corollary of their conviction that the evangelization of the country must be accomplished through the vernacular tongues was the establishment of a college of Oriental learning. "If ever," they said, "the Gospel stands in India, it must be by native opposed to native in demonstrating its excellence above all other systems." It was to the natives learned alike in Sanskrit and in English that the missionaries looked for the agency which was to extend their efforts, and the College was therefore to have Professors of Sanskrit, Arabic and English.

Another interesting feature of the Mission was its self-supporting character. As soon as it started, it was determined to dine at a common table, and to have a common stock, each family being given a small allowance for personal expenses; it was resolved that no one should engage in private trade, and that whatever might be earned should be credited to the common stock. This resolution was loyally observed. Not to multiply instances though the boarding-house established by Dr. Marshman yielded an income of £1,000 in the first two years, he kept only £34 a year for the expenses of himself and his family; and the total sum contributed to the Mission by the missionaries themselves, from first to last, was £80,000.

The missionaries did not, at least in the early days, carry on their work without great difficulties, due principaliy to the hostility of the British Government. "They lived from day to day under the incessant fear that, from some casual expression, some carelessness in their converts, their labours would be brought to an end, their property confiscated, and their persons deported as seditious offenders. They were saved in the first place by their situation. The Danish Government, unaffected by the prejudices of the Company, was friendly to Mission effort. The local authorities were friendly to establishments which brought occupation and comfort to hundreds of their people. They resisted gallantly every suggestion of extradition, and on one occasion at least took the responsibility of a quarrel which might have involved war. Throughout the struggle the conduct of the Serampore missionaries was beyond praise. They never defied the Government. They never fought minor questions. They never engaged in political discussions. They simply and calmly refused to intermit their missionary labour on any secular consideration whatever." * The first serious interference with their work took place in 1806

* *Carey, Marshman and Ward,* Calcutta Review, 1859.

when the Government of Sir George Barlow, alarmed at the mutiny of Vellore and fearing the results of any attempt to proselytize the natives, forbade all itinerant preaching or the establishment of stations beyond the limits of Serampore. Next year the progress, if not the extinction, of the Mission was seriously threatened by the Government of Lord Minto. A pamphlet had been issued from the Serampore press, reflecting severely on Islâm and Muhammad. The British Government demanded its suppression, and the missionaries, discovering an interpolation by the Munshi employed to revise the translation, surrendered the edition. Not content with this, the Government called on the Governor of Serampore, Colonel Krefting, to withdraw his patronage and send them and their press to Calcutta, where they would be subject to British authority. Krefting refused to submit to such dictation, especially as the missionaries were under the direct patronage of the Danish King; a personal appeal was made to Lord Minto, and the demand for their surrender was abandoned.

In 1812 they had another misfortune. A fire destroyed nearly everything in their printing press. Property to the value of Rs. 7,000 was lost, besides many valuable manuscripts and translations; but friends in India and England quickly came to their aid, and in two months the loss was made good. Later in the same year further trouble followed, the opposition of Lord Minto forcing five missionaries, who had arrived without a license, to fly from Bengal, while another was deported. In 1837 the Mission came to a close for want of funds. Marshman, now the sole survivor of the three great pioneers—for Ward had died in 1823 and Carey in 1834—found it impossible to carry on the work without further help. Mr. Mack was sent to England to recruit the finances of the Mission, but could get little assistance, and he was therefore obliged to arrange for its transfer to the Baptist Missionary Society. The news reached Calcutta 12 hours after Dr. Marshman's death.

The work done by the Serampore missionaries has been well summed up by Dr. Marshman's son:—"The Serampore Mission may be said to belong to the heroic age of missions, and the interest which is attached to it will continue to increase with the future triumphs of Christian truth in India. At the period when it was established, the public authorities, both in India and England, were opposed, on political grounds, to every attempt to introduce religious or secular knowledge into the country. It was the zeal, fortitude and perseverance of Dr. Carey and his two colleagues which were mainly instrumental in inducing higher and

more improved principles of policy. Those who first moved in this undertaking have well deserved the gratitude of every Indian philanthropist. The Mission was established by three men of humble lineage, 'apostates,' as their opponents delighted to term them, from the last and the loom. but of sterling genius. They were brought together by unforeseen circumstances, and, when their infant establishment was threatened with extinction by their own Government, were providentially provided with an asylum in a foreign settlement till the storm had blown over. A unity of object produced a unanimity of sentiment which has rarely been surpassed. Every private feeling and every individual predilection was merged in the prosecution of a great public undertaking, which they pursued with unabated energy to the end of their lives. They were exactly fitted for mutual co-operation. They were all imbued with the same large and comprehensive views, the same animation and zeal, and the same pecuniary disinterestedness. Their united energies were consecrated to the service of religion, for the promotion of which they were enabled, by severe and protracted labours, to contribute a sum, which, at the close of the Mission, was found to amount to eighty thousand pounds sterling."

"The Serampore missionaries never considered themselves but as the simple pioneers of Christian improvement in India; and it is as pioneers that their labours are to be estimated. In the infancy of modern missions, it fell to their lot to lay down and exemplify the principles on which they should be organized, and to give a right direction to missionary efforts. They were the first to enforce the necessity of translating the Scriptures into all the languages of India. Their own translations were necessarily and confessedly imperfect, but some imperfections may be forgiven to men who produced the first editions of the New Testament in more than thirty of the Oriental languages and dialects, and thus gave to the work of translation that impulse which has never subsided. They were the first to insist on the absolute exclusion of caste from the native Christian community and church. They established the first native schools for heathen children in the north of India, and organized the first college for the education of native catechists and itinerants. They printed the first books in the language of Bengal, and laid the foundation of a vernacular library. They were the first to cultivate and improve that language and render it the vehicle of national instruction. They published the first native newspaper in India, and the first religious periodical work. In all the departments of missionary labour and intellectual improvement they led the way, and it is on

the broad foundation which they laid, that the edifice of modern Indian missions has been erected."*

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

In 1803, a few years after the Serampore missionaries began their work, the Revd. David Brown, their old friend, who had now become Provost of Fort William, purchased a house (Aldeen House) on the banks of the river, to the south of the town, and continued to reside there till his death in 1812. In 1805 the Revd. Henry Martyn arrived from England as a Chaplain on the Bengal establishment and was stationed at Serampore till October 1806. The Revd. Daniel Corrie also came to Bengal in the latter year, and both he and Martyn resided at Aldeen House. Here they and Brown worshipped in an abandoned temple, commonly called the Pagoda, which was included in Brown's purchase. He fitted it up as an oratory, and "consecrated it by a prayer-meeting to the service of the living and true God, Whose praises now resounded through the arches which had so long echoed the pæans of the idol .... In that Pagoda, which is yet the first object which meets the eye in sailing up from Calcutta towards Serampore, every denominational feeling was forgotten, and Carey, Marshman and Ward joined in the same chorus of praise with Brown, Martyn and Corrie."†

All three played a great part in the history of Anglican Missions. Brown may be regarded as the parent of missions of the Established Church in this part of India—he has indeed been called "the father of evangelical religion in Bengal." Corrie devoted his life to the evangelistic cause and was the first Bishop of Madras. Martyn left a high reputation as a missionary, short as his career was, for he died in 1812 in Armenia; there, according to an epitaph by Macaulay, "in manhood's early bloom, the Christian hero found a pagan tomb." The Revd. Claudius Buchanan, then Vice-Provost of the College of Fort William, was also a frequent visitor to Aldeen House, where he frequently discussed his scheme for the appointment of Bishops in India. Owing largely to his exertions, the prohibition on missionaries residing in India was removed in 1813, and an ecclesiastical establishment was sanctioned, Bishop Middleton being appointed the first Bishop of Calcutta in 1814.

His successor, Bishop Heber, who delighted in calling himself "the chief missionary in India," appointed the Revd. W. Morton to Chinsura in 1823. Mr. Morton, who was sent to Bengal by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, stayed here till

---

* J. C. Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward* (1859), Vol. II, pp. 520-3.

† J. C. Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward* (1895), Vol. I, pp. 246-7.

1837, when the society abandoned the Mission schools he had founded and its connection with the station.*

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MISSION.

Another Mission established during the first half of the 18th century was that of the Free Church of Scotland under Dr. Alexander Duff. In 1844, after having founded and organized the Free Church General Assembly's Institution, Dr. Duff took in hand branch schools for the evangelization of rural areas by means of educated catechists and converts. As the resources of the Mission grew and more converts were ordained, stations were opened in succession at Bānsberiā, Chinsura and Mahānād. "The story of Bānsberiā," writes Dr. George Smith, "illustrates the enthusiasm with which, not only in Calcutta, but to the farthest confines of India, good men, in the army and the civil service, sought to mark their sympathy with the Free Church Mission. On being driven from Ghoshpārā, where the two ablest converts had begun a mission among the new sect of the Kartābhajās, Dr. Duff resolved to establish a settlement in another country. He crossed the river Hooghly to its right bank, leaving the whole country on the left to the Established Church. A few miles to the north of the county town of Hooghly district he discovered the school-house of the Brāhmo Samāj of Calcutta closed and for sale. Dwārkā Nāth Tagore, the successor of Rāmmohan Rai, had died in England, and his son was unable to maintain the educational work of the sect. The perpetual lease of the grounds, as well as the large bungalow, was purchased by Dr. Duff, whose first object it was to erect substantial buildings for a Christian High school. For this there were no funds since the expenditure at Ghoshpārā. It was Sir James, then Major Outram, who came to the rescue."

Outram had received £3,000 as his share of the prize-money obtained in the conquest of Sind. He had protested against the annexation as an act of "rascality," and regarded his share as "blood money." Refusing to touch a farthing of it for his own personal use, he distributed it all among the philanthropic and religious charities of Bombay, except Rs. 6,000 which he offered to Dr. Duff. With this sum Dr. Duff was able to erect in 1845 a Mission school on the banks of the Ganges. The school continued to work for about 35 years, but was closed in 1882, when the building was sold to Bābu Lalit Mohan Singh, late Vice-Chairman of the Hooghly District Board. Of the work carried on here, Dr. Smith wrote as follows in 1879:—"The Mission-House has been a source of numberless blessings to the neighbourhood; from its pupils a goodly number of conversions

* Long, *Handbook of Bengal Missions* (1848), pp. 276-8.

have sprung with a wide diffusion of Christian knowledge. The building still perpetuates the political purity and English uprightness of Outram. The resting-place in Westminster Abbey, and the equestrian statues by Foley, on the Thames Embankment and fronting the Calcutta Clubs, commemorate his victories in Persia and the relief of Lucknow. But let not the Sind blood-money and Duff's Bānsberiā school be forgotten, though recorded not on living marble or enduring brass."*

---

* Life of Alexander Duff (1879), Vol. II, pp. 46 51.

CHAPTER VI.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

CLIMATE.

HOOGHLY district has no great reputation for healthiness, though it is not so insalubrious as it was 30 or 40 years ago. The climate is hot, moist and relaxing. The surface is but little above sea-level, and many of the rivers have silted up to such an extent that, after the rains, they are represented by a series of stagnant pools or have only an attenuated sluggish stream. During the monsoon, from July to September, vegetation is rank, and the water becomes thick and muddy. The result of such unfavourable conditions is that in September fever, with bowel-complaints, breaks out in an epidemic form, and continues to be more or less virulent till the middle of January. The general health then improves till March. During the hot weather the sources of water-supply are apt to dry up, producing epidemics of cholera and dysentery. Towards the end of May and the beginning of June the weather again becomes oppressive, hot and sultry, heralding the approach of the monsoon. May to July are, on the whole, the healthiest months, and then the period from the middle of January to the middle of March. November and December are the two worst months, *i.e.*, the mortality is heaviest. The least unhealthy area is the Ārāmbāgh subdivision, especially the flood-swept tract east of the Dwārakeswar and west of the Dāmodar; but Ārāmbāgh town has now a bad reputation, so much so that officers are said to dread being posted there. The most unhealthy part of the district is the Hooghly subdivision, especially Balāgarh thāna and the inland thānas of Dhaniākhāli, Polbā and Hooghly (rural).

VITAL STATISTICS.

Prior to 1892 there were so many changes in the system of registering vital statistics, that it is unsafe to draw any inferences from the figures compiled before that year. The returns now prepared are also, it is true, not so reliable as could be desired,

but they are sufficiently accurate for calculating the comparative growth of the population and for gauging the relative healthiness and unhealthiness of different years.

Excluding the returns for 1892, when registration was admittedly incomplete, the statistics for the 15 years 1893-1907 show an average birth-rate of 30·24 per 1,000, the lowest ratio recorded in the whole Province. The yearly birth-rate has varied from 34·94 per mille in 1904 to 26·87 in 1896 per 1,000, the very low birth-rate in the latter year being probably an after-effect of the extreme unhealthiness of the preceding year. The deaths during the same period (1893-1907) averaged 35·20 per mille, thus exceeding considerably the annual recorded birth-rate; the yearly death-rate varied from 40·73 in 1907 to 21·94 in 1906. The poor vitality indicated by this high death-rate and low birth-rate furnishes another proof of the unhealthiness of the district. Indeed, were it not for an influx of immigrants to the Serāmpore subdivision, the census of 1901 would have shown a decrease in the population: even in spite of immigration, the Sadar subdivision showed in 1901 a decrease of 0·3 per cent. The unhealthiness of the latter subdivision is exemplified in its two municipalities of Hooghly-Chinsura and Bānsberiā; for in the ten years 1893-1902 Hooghly town had an average death-rate of 50·43 per mille against a birth-rate of 28·42, while Bānsberiā had an annual death-rate of 50·02 against a birth-rate of 26·89 per mille. It is no matter for wonder, therefore, that the population in the former town decreased from 33,060 in 1891 to 29,383 in 1901, and in the latter from 6,783 to 6,473. The town of Arāmbāgh appears to have suffered almost as much as these two municipalities, its average death and birth-rate for these ten years being 38·37 and 27·29 per mille, respectively.

Infantile mortality.

Infantile mortality is high, and it is estimated that more than a third of the children die within five years of birth. The percentage of deaths is highest under the age of one, and the incidence of mortality is greatest in the winter months.

PRINCIPAL DISEASES.

Fever.

The registration of deaths caused by fever is notoriously inaccurate, as a considerable number of deaths due to other diseases, such as pneumonia, pleurisy, etc., are ascribed to fever; but for comparative purposes the figures may be accepted. They show a high mortality, the annual death-rate during the 15 years 1893-1907 averaging 25 per mille, or about 70 per cent. of the total number of deaths.

The following account of the types of fever and their causation is extracted from a note kindly communicated by Lieutenant-Colonel D. G. Crawford, Civil Surgeon of Hooghly:—

"Malarial fever is still the prevailing disease of the Hooghly district, though fortunately it is no longer the scourge that it was 50 to 30 years ago. Something has been done since that time to alleviate its ravages, particularly the flushing of some of the 'dead' rivers of the district, since the construction of the Dānkuni drainage channel in 1873 and the opening of the Eden Canal in 1881. Still, however, the physical conditions of the district remain much as they were half a century ago; and thus they must always remain, for no human agency can alter them. The district is little above sea-level, it has a heavy rainfall, it is traversed by numerous 'dead' or silting-up rivers, and it is chiefly devoted to the growth of rice, a crop which requires the ground to be a swamp during several months of the year for its cultivation. These conditions necessarily lead to its being waterlogged in the rains. Practically, every house built in the district necessitates the excavation of a small tank or pit (*dobā*) to get the earth, which forms a plinth, to raise the house above flood-level. Efficient drainage is an impossibility, as there is not sufficient fall. The tanks which abound in the towns—in the Hooghly-Chinsura municipality alone there are 700—the drains, with their inefficient fall, forming chains of stagnant pools instead of running streams, and the vast expanses of rice cultivation, all supply ample breeding grounds for the mosquito by which malarial fever is spread. After allowing for errors in registration, the fact remains that the mortality from fever, including its most common and fatal sequela, viz., enlargement of the spleen, is very high. Of the other diseases which also bear the name of fever, enteric or typhoid fever certainly occurs. I have seen cases in both adults and children. I have never seen cases of typhus or of relapsing fever. Cerebro-spinal fever has been seen, but is rare."

Burdwān fever.

During the third quarter of the 19th century the district was devastated by a peculiar type of malignant malarial fever. It was commonly known as "Burdwān fever," though Hooghly suffered as much as Burdwān. It was endemic and became epidemic generally. In its worst phases the fever assumed a tendency to congestion of some vital organ, most commonly the brain or lungs; and among the commonest sequelæ were enlargement of the liver and spleen. Its chief peculiarity was the tendency to a relapse or a succession of relapses; and, in some cases, sudden and great depression of vital energy followed.

"This fever," writes Colonel Crawford, "appears to have first attracted notice in the Jessore district about 1825; it began to affect the Nadiā district about 1832; and it came across the

Bhāgīrathī or Hooghly river into the Hooghly district in 1857-59. In these years Bandel, Bānsberiā and Tribenī suffered greatly from the epidemic fever. It reached Pānduā in 1862, Dwārbāsinī in 1863; spread along the banks of the Kānā Nadī and Saraswatī rivers in 1864; reached the Kānā Dāmodar in 1866, and the east bank of the Dāmodar in 1867. Jahānābād (now Arāmbāgh) was attacked in 1868 and Goghāt thāna in 1869-71. The Serampore subdivision suffered severely in 1871-73. The total duration of this epidemic of fever in the Hooghly district may be said to have been 20 years, viz., from 1857 to 1877, though its ravages did not last for so long in any one place, the usual duration of the fever in each of the villages attacked being from three to seven years. The mortality was enormous, being estimated by various observers at from one-third of the whole population up to nine-tenths in certain very severely affected places. Rich and poor, old and young, all classes seem to have suffered alike.

"Many officers were, from time to time during the prevalence of the epidemic, deputed to make special enquiries into the origin, cause, and type of the fever, and the condition of the affected tracts. The general consensus of opinion was that the disease was a malarial fever of an intensely aggravated type, attended by an unprecedented mortality. The causes most generally assigned were over-population and obstruction of drainage, caused by the silting-up of rivers. But it cannot be said that any completely satisfactory reason has been put forward, which accounts for the outbreak of the fever, its gradual spread from east to west, and its disappearance. The fever was called by the natives *jwar bikār* (literally, fever without sense), *i.e.*, fever with delirium, a term which in recent years has also been applied to cases of plague. During the 12 years 1863-74 no less than 51 temporary epidemic dispensaries were from time to time opened and closed in this district alone."

Cholera. Cholera has long been endemic in the district, but so far as can be ascertained, there have not been such widespread epidemics as in other districts, like Purī and Purneā. The rural tracts do not suffer so much as the towns on the Hooghly; in fact, one or other of these seven municipalities usually heads the list as regards the mortality reported under this head from the different registering areas. The deaths are fewest in the rains (June to October), and are usually most numerous in November-December or March to May, the incidence being greatest in April. During the last 30 years, the highest mortality from cholera was recorded in 1896, viz., 4,376 deaths, and the next highest (4,141) in 1907. In

the former year Kotrang stood first with the very heavy death-rate of 16·65 per mille, followed by Uttarpārā (14·02) and Serampore (13·02). In the latter year all the riparian towns were more or less affected, Serampore suffering most severely from a virulent outbreak early in August – an uncommon time for cholera to be epidemic in Bengal.

Next to cholera, the largest number of deaths are ascribed to diarrhœa and dysentery, these diseases being grouped together under one head They prevail throughout the year, the incidence of deaths being greatest from October to February, especially from December to February, and lowest in the hot weather. The yearly variations are small, the death-rate not rising above 2·65 (in 1896) or falling below 1 per mille. As in the case of cholera, the towns, especially Serampore and Uttarpārā, suffer more from these diseases than the rural tracts. Hooghly being one of the few districts in Bengal in which a high mortality from bowel complaints is usually reported, Captain W. C. Ross, I.M.S., Deputy Sanitary Commissioner, made a special enquiry into the causes of their prevalence in January 1906, the area selected for investigation being the three thānas, Singur, Krishtanagar and Arāmbāgh. His conclusions are summarized as follows :— Bowel complaints.

Dysentery is prevalent, especially in Arāmbāgh thāna, but is not generally of a severe type, and does not constitute an important cause of death, except in Arāmbāgh thāna. (2) Diarrhœa is the heading under which most of the diarrhœa and dysentery deaths are returned, except in Arāmbāgh thāna where the numbers are nearly equal. (3) Again, except in Arāmbāgh thāna (though there are some even there), a larger number of the deaths from diarrhœa are due to terminal diarrhœa in cases of fever (*trypanosomiasis ?*). This error in the returns greatly magnifies the dysentery and diarrhœa death rate. (4) A small number of the deaths returned under dysentery and diarrhœa may be due to cholera (atypical and lingering cases). (5) Infantile diarrhœa is remarkable for its rarity, but simple diarrhœa, especially amongst old and debilitated people, is more frequent as a cause of death.

It would seem that the incidence of dysentery is directly associated with the quality of the water-supply. In all these thānas the water-supply is bad in most places. The river water (above the tidal areas) is apparently pretty good, but in the non-riparian areas tanks and *dobās* serve all purposes. The reservation of one tank (if there is one) in each village, or the construction of wells for use for drinking and cooking purposes only, seems to be the only hope of diminishing the mortality from dysentery and preventing epidemic outbursts of cholera. "From

the experience obtained at Arāmbāgh, there is no difficulty in getting people to use well water when it is made available: they are only too glad to get the chance, and come long distances to get good water for drinking."

As regards the clinical history of the disease, it generally affects old people over 50 years of age. "Persistent fever, generally of a quotidian type, comes on and continues for several months; the spleen is invariably enlarged, and later the liver generally becomes enlarged also. Emaciation and anæmia are always present and progressive: there is often œdema of the feet, ankles, etc.; jaundice frequently supervenes; and the case ends in a terminal dirrahœa of two or three weeks' duration. The clinical picture here represented almost compels one to believe that the disease is Trypanosomiasis."

Small-pox. Small-pox generally breaks out towards the end of the cold weather and lasts for two or three months, *i.e.*, up to the first half of May. The number of deaths is, however, small, the ratio not rising above ·40 per mille except in 1906 and 1907, when it was ·62 and ·88, respectively. The disease, as a rule, causes more deaths in the towns than in the rural tracts, Serampore, Bhadreswar and Hooghly showing the highest proportionate mortality; the high death-rate in the towns is partly due to imported cases, chiefly from Calcutta. On the other hand, the small-pox death-rate in 1907 was 4·96 per mille in Polbā thāna, a typical rural area, whereas it was 1·19 per mille in Hooghly-Chinsura town.

Plague. Plague was first noticed in the district in 1899, but the total mortality due to it has hitherto been below one hundred each year, except in 1903 and 1905 when it rose to 154 and 292, respectively, while in 1906 and 1907 the deaths fell to 7 and 12, respectively. Deaths occur chiefly from February to May. Chandernagore and Hooghly-Chinsura town are the only places in Bengal proper, outside Calcutta, where plague has been epidemic. From January to May 1905 there were 254 cases with 204 deaths in the latter town. Figures for Chandernagore are not available, but the number is believed to have been proportionately higher.

Other diseases. Among other diseases, syphilis and gonorrhœa are common. Elephantiasis is met with, though not so often as in some other districts like Purī. Abscesses are very common, and so are ulcers of all kinds, the damp climate not being favourable to the quick healing of skin lesions.

In-firmities. Blindness is less common than in any other district of West Bengal (except Howrah), only 93 males and 78 females per 100,000 being returned as blind in 1901. Operations for cataract, the

chief cause of blindness among the aged, are comparatively few. Only 2,041 cases of eye-disease were treated throughout the district in 1900, the largest number treated in any dispensary being 346 at the Imāmbārā Hospital. Probably, most of those who have cataract, and are willing to be operated upon, go to Calcutta for the operation; from at least half of the district it is easier to get to Calcutta than to Chinsura. The deaf-mutes enumerated in 1901 represented 66 males and 46 females per 100,000, the lowest ratio in West Bengal except Midnapore; while the insane were returned at 43 males and 21 females per 100,000. Considering the poor vitality of the people, the comparatively greater strain of town life, and the fact that the proportion of residents in urban areas is greater than in any other Bengal district, the latter percentage is noticeably small.

Leprosy. Leprosy is rare, the number of lepers reported in 1901 being only 362, representing 55 males and 14 females per 100,000. In view of the fact that Hooghly adjoins Burdwān and Bānkurā, two of the worst leper areas in India, this percentage is also surprisingly small. The census statistics are confirmed by the experience of the Civil Surgeon, Lieutenant-Colonel D. G. Crawford, I.M.S., who states that during seven years in the district he saw few cases of leprosy. Popularly the disease is believed to be due to some heinous sin in a previous life.

VACCINATION. The Metropolitan Circle of Vaccination, including Hooghly district, was created in 1869, and Act IV of 1865 prohibiting inoculation was extended to it in 1871. Act V of 1880, by which vaccination is compulsory in municipal areas, was extended to the municipality of Hooghly-Chinsura in 1881 and to the other municipalities of the district in subsequent years. In 1892 the control of the Vaccination Department in rural areas was transferred from the Deputy Sanitary Commissioner to the Civil Surgeons.

The general attitude of the people towards vaccination in this district is one of passive acquiescence, combined with a strong objection to payment of the fees prescribed for vaccination by licensed vaccinators. The lower classes still prefer to seek protection against small-pox epidemics by offering *pūjā* to the goddess Sītalā. In 1907-08 the number of persons successfully vaccinated was 28,342, representing 32 per mille of the population, protection being afforded to 42·41 per cent. of infants under one year of age. In the preceding five years the annual number successfully vaccinated averaged 28·37 per 1,000 of the population.

Inoculation. Before the introduction of vaccination, inoculation was in common use as a protection against small-pox. It was performed

by a class known as *Acharjyas* or priests of the goddess Sītalā Devī. They inserted in the skin of the forearm a minute portion of the virus found in the vesicles of a small-pox patient, and after sprinkling the part with Ganges water, tied a strip of cloth round it. Small-pox pustules appeared, and after considerable inflammation and sometimes prostration, the fever abated, usually on the 16th or 17th day. Inoculation is now no longer practised.

MEDICAL INSTITUTION.

There are 16 public dispensaries and hospitals in the district, besides four private charitable dispensaries not under Government supervision, as shown in the marginal statement, which gives the places at which they are situated and the dates of their establishment.

Public.

Serampore	...	1836
Imāmbārā Hospital	...	1836
Uttarpārā	...	1851
Dwārbāsinī	..	1856
Baidyabāti	...	1857
Ārāmbāgh	...	1871
Rishrā ...	...	1873
Bainchi ...	...	1878
Bhadreswar	...	1885
Khānākul	...	1893
Mandalai	...	1893
Hooghly Female	...	1894
Balāgarh	...	1894
Itachona	...	1901
Bhandarhāti	...	1905
Haripāl	...	1908

Private.

Imāmbārā (private)		
Raghunāthpur	.	1858
Tārakeswar	..	
Tolāphātak (Chinsura)		1905

The hospital at Serampore, which was established through the exertions of Dr. Marshman, was transferred in 1870 to the control of the municipality, and is now called the Walsh Hospital after a former Commissioner of Burdwān. It is maintained partly from the municipal fund, partly from subscriptions, and partly from miscellaneous receipts, including securities to the amount of Rs. 4,000. An out-patient block was erected in 1906 at a cost of Rs. 11,000, through the liberality of the late Bābu Nandalāl Gosāin and his brothers; and the hospital, which has since been rebuilt from subscriptions supplemented by a Government grant, now contains 34 beds for males and 8 beds for females. The number of out-door patients is the largest in the district, averaging 47·64 daily in 1907, while the daily average of indoor patients was 21·69. The Imāmbārā Hospital is maintained almost wholly from the Mohsin Fund with the help of private subscriptions from mills on the other side of the river. This hospital was established through the exertions of the then Civil Surgeon, Dr. T. Wise. It was first located in a hired house in Chauk Bazar and then in a house in Mogaltuli Lane, formerly occupied by the Madrasa, and was under the charge of the Civil Surgeon. In 1839 Dr. Wise was succeeded by Dr. Esdaile, an enthusiast for medical mesmerism, through whose exertions some professional mesmerisers were added to the staff. It had also a Musalmān department for *Yunāni* medicine and a *dāi* class from 1872 to 1878; this class was started again in 1902. In 1894, the

hospital was removed to its present site in one of the smaller buildings of the old barracks. An operation room was added in 1898, and an out-patient block in May 1906, at a cost of about Rs. 11,000, of which Rs. 5,000 was contributed by Rai Bahādur Barodā Prasanna Som and Rs. 4,000 by the Mohsin Fund; in 1908 a new and up-to-date operation room was built at a cost of Rs. 4,730 raised by public subscriptions. The building contains two surgical wards with 16 beds, a medical ward with 8 beds, a dysentery ward with 8 beds, a cholera ward with 2 beds, and a pauper ward with 6 beds, in all 40 beds.

Besides the Serampore hospital, there are municipal dispensaries at Rishrā, Baidyabāti, Bhadreswar and Arāmbāgh; while the District Board maintains dispensaries at Balāgarh, Khānākul, Bhandarhāti and Haripāl. In-patients are received at the Arāmbāgh dispensary; the other six afford out-door relief. The dispensary at Uttarpārā contains 16 beds for males and 4 beds for females and is maintained by an endowment given by the Mukherji family of Uttarpārā and by Government contributions. That at Dwārbāsinī is maintained chiefly by Rājā Piārī Mohan Mukherji, the Government and District Board also making small grants. The Bihāri Lāl dispensary at Bainchi, which has 4 beds for males and 2 beds for females, is wholly, and those at Mandalai and Itachona mainly, kept up from private endowments. The Bainchi dispensary owes its existence to an endowment of a lakh and-a-half of rupees left by Bābu Bihāri Lāl Mukherji, zamīndār of Bainchi, for a school and a dispensary. The Mandalai charitable dispensary was established in 1893 by Dr. Bholānāth Bose, who left his property for charitable purposes. The Itachona dispensary owes its origin to the liberality of a zamīndār named Srīnārāyan Kundu, and the Bhandarhāti dispensary to that of Bābu Girish Chandra Chatterji, a pleader-zamīndār of Howrah, who gave a building and the sum of Rs. 5,000: the District Board, however, maintains the dispensary. The most recent dispensary is that at Haripāl, which was opened in 1908, Srīmatī Sushilā Devī giving a house and Rs. 25,000 to the District Board which maintains it.

There is one female hospital located in a building adjoining the Imāmbārā Hospital, which was opened in July 1894. Both in-patients and out-patients are treated here, the daily average in 1907 being 15 and 42, respectively. There is also a *Yunāni* dispensary in the Imāmbārā under the charge of a *hakīm* or native doctor. A small private dispensary is kept up at Tārakeswar by the Mahant, and at Raghunāthpur by Piārī Mohan Rai, a grandson of Rājā Rām Mohan Rai. There was formerly a

dispensary maintained by the local zamīndār at Sikandrapur, but it was closed in 1905. Another maintained by the Free Kirk Mission at Tribenī was closed in 1902, but the Baiuchi estate is now building an out-patient dispensary there and will, it is reported, wholly maintain it.

There is accommodation for in-door patients at Hooghly, Serampore, Arāmbāgh and Baiuchi, and in the Hooghly Female Hospital. In the other dispensaries out-door patients only are treated. The location of the various dispensaries, public and private, shows that the towns along the river are fairly well provided with medical aid, but that the great block between the East Indian Railway line and the Dāmodar, which suffers from malarial fever, gets little qualified medical help. Arāmbāgh and Khānākul thānās, between the Dāmodar and Dwārakeswar, get even less, and Goghāt thāna west of the Dwārakeswar none at all.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.

At the census of 1901, 348 persons were returned as certificated practitioners, 1,431 as practitioners without diplomas, 312 as midwives, and 92 as compounders, etc. This gives a total of 2,183 for the whole district, excluding the small number of those in Government service who are confined to the towns; and it is a fair inference that the staff of medical men is inadequate, especially in the rural areas. The bulk of the Hindus and Muhammadans have not yet lost faith in the old systems of medicine, *Kavirāji* or *Yunāni*. But *hakīms* are no longer available, and *kavirājes* resident in the district are few and far between. Those who are better off often consult the native physicians of Calcutta, while patent medicines command a growing sale. A few homœopathic and allopathic doctors practise in the mofussil; but their number is very limited, and their experience is chiefly confined to the common cases of malarial fever, cholera or bowel-complaints. Quacks are fairly common, and barbers still perform simple surgical operations. Occasionally also up-country men, especially Punjābis, operate for cataract. Midwives belong to the lowest castes, such as Hāri, Muchi, Kaorā and Dom, with a sprinkling of Bāgdis. They are ignorant and illiterate, but from constant practice have a large experience of ordinary deliveries. The profession is generally hereditary, passing from mother to daughter.

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE.

GENERAL CONDITION.

THE general characteristics which distinguish agricultural conditions in the deltaic plains of Bengal are strikingly exemplified in the district of Hooghly. The rainfall is regular and copious, the soil is fertile, and it is periodically enriched by fresh deposits of silt from the overflow of the rivers. The latter are constantly carrying on the work of erosion and accretion, of soil denudation and formation, but the process of soil formation is the more active of the two. The manner in which a large river with a steady slow current acts as a land-builder is best seen in thāna Balāgarh, where every year the Hooghly (Bhāgīrathī) throws up *chars* after the rains, either in its bed or along its bank. If not swept away in a year or two, the *chars*, when sufficiently raised above flood-level, are eagerly sought after by the ryots. Being renovated annually by deposits of silt, they require no manure, and they grow splendid *rabi* crops of pulses, mustard, tobacco or vegetables. The lands along the river are similarly raised by accretion, and are also made to yield *rabi* crops, if high, and rice, if low-lying ; but a large proportion, not receiving fresh silt deposits, remains waste, and are covered either with coarse grass or jungly undergrowth.

Thānas Arāmbāgh and Khānākul present many of the typical features of a tract exposed to river floods. Here the Dāmodar river, rushing down from the Chotā Nāgpur plateau in a bed too narrow for the passage of its flood-water, and restrained on the east by a high continuous embankment, spills over its right bank during the rains. On this side the stream, sweeping over the lowlands, deposits fine or coarse sand, the detritus of the uplands. The low lands are more or less covered with grass, but on or near the bank, where they are enriched by silt, produce good *rabi* crops. The higher lands, which are comparatively scarce, are occupied by houses or homestead gardens growing vegetables, and, somewhat lower down, by winter rice crops.

A third aspect of an alluvial plain is seen in the Serampore subdivision and the rest of the Sadar subdivision. This tract is protected from river floods by high banks or artificial embankments, but is liable to be submerged by excessive rain. The lands, whether high or low, are extremely fertile. The uplands yield fine crops of vegetables, and land at a slightly lower level *āus* rice or jute alternating with *rabi*. The lowlands, enriched by the drainage and refuse of the villages, are eminently adapted for the cultivation of winter rice. Southwards, in the Serampore subdivision, the lowest lands receive the drainage from the whole of the northern tract, which is unable to find an outlet into the rivers. They are consequently converted into extensive marshes covered with reeds, sedges and coarse grasses, but winter rice grows well on their borders.

In the thāna of Goghāt to the west the level surface of the recent alluvium is no longer seen. The country is composed of old alluvium and disintegrated laterite, and the surface is undulating, being broken by the scouring action of the rivers and surface drainage. Rice and a little pulse are grown, chiefly along the banks of the hill streams; but much of the land is barren, or is covered with thorny plants and scrubs intermixed with trees.

RAINFALL. The rainfall, averaging nearly 60 inches in a year, is more than sufficient for even such a semi-aquatic plant as rice—indeed, 45 to 50 inches would suffice for the usual crops, if timely or evenly distributed. According to the ryot, a little rain in *Paus* (December-January) is good for the *rabi*; and light showers in *Māgh* and *Phālgun* (February and March), besides strengthening the *rabi* crops, facilitate ploughing. Heavy rains are necessary in *Asārh* and *Srāban* (June and July) to quicken the growth of broadcast seedlings and to reduce the ground to the soft slush required for transplanting the young shoots from the nursery. The month of *Bhādra* (August-September) should be dry, in order to prevent the winter rice plants rotting, and to permit the successful reaping of early rice and jute. In *Aswin* (September-October) there should be fairly good rain, so that the winter rice just coming into ear may ripen properly; and there should be no winds in the following month to blow down the mature grain. Finally, no rain is wanted in *Agrahāyan* (November-December), otherwise, the rice stalks rot in the fields before reaping.

The general slope of the country is from north-west to south-east. Heavy rain for several days together on the Chotā Nāgpur plateau brings down floods in the Dāmodar and its branches, which do serious damage to the crops on its west bank. Similarly, a

heavy precipitation of rain locally swells the numerous silted-up channels in the Sadar and Serampore subdivisions; and as they have no outlet into the main rivers, the water spills over on either side, to the consequent damage of the crops. The level of water in the marshes of the Serampore subdivision also rises, causing loss to the winter rice crop grown along them.

SOILS.

Except in thāna Goghāt, where the soil is composed of the detritus of the uplands, viz., broken laterite, *kankar* and older alluvium, the soil consists entirely of new alluvium. This alluvial deposit is 5 to 10 feet thick and rests on a sub-soil of tenacious clay, varying in thickness from 10 to 30 feet. The surface alluvium, where formed from the silt deposits of the Hooghly and its branch, the Saraswatī, is of tough clay (*entel*), but that formed from the silt of the Dāmodar and its branches is light and porous. At places the Dāmodar, like the Dwārakeswar, has deposited a layer of sand on the sub-soil, *e.g.*, at Magrā and in thāna Arāmbāgh. In the swamps, which receive the drainage of the villages, the bottom is of sticky tough clay. The soil in the north of the district is partly a laterite clay and partly a red-coloured coarse-grained sand, characteristic of the eastern Vindhyan formation.

Rice being the most important crop, the classification of the soil is sometimes based on suitablity for its growth, *e.g.*, it is sharp (*tez*) or otherwise; but the usual classification is according to level. The highest lands are occupied by houses (*bāstu*) and their compounds (*ud-bāstu*). The high lands adjoining them, on which vegetable gardens and orchards are found, are *dāngā*. Paddy lands at a lower level, which are almost always in the form of a saucer-shaped depression or dip, are divided into five classes. Land which ordinarily gets the right quantity of water, and is also enriched with refuse, is called *āwal* or first class land; it is generally a plot in the deepest part of the fields or a zone round it. It is flanked on either side by a zone of *doem* or second class land, above or below which will be zones of *seyam* and *chāhāram*, *i.e.*, third or fourth class lands. Land above the usual flood-level is called *sunā*, and consists of a mixture of clay with more or less sand.

IRRIGATION.

The value of artificial irrigation is fairly well understood. It is essential for the cultivation of special crops, like sugarcane, potatoes, onions and betel leaf, and of the *boro* or spring rice. It is also often practised in the case of several *rabi* crops, and in years of drought for all crops. As the district has not yet been cadastrally surveyed, statistics of the irrigated area are not available; but 4,972 acres were irrigated in 1906-07 from the Eden

Canal. A rough idea of the proportion of land under irrigation may perhaps be obtained from the figures for the *khās mahāls* of the Burdwān Rāj lying within this district, which were cadastrally surveyed in 1889-92. Here, out of an area of 8,071 acres under cultivation, 877 acres were found to be irrigated (viz., 289 from wells, 258 from tanks and 330 acres from other sources), *i.e.*, about one-ninth of the cultivated area.

Wells.

Wells are not numerous and are not liked by the cultivators, though they are cheap enough, a *kachchā* well with pottery rings costing Rs. 40 to Rs. 100 according to the depth of water. The water-level varies according to the season, but usually is 6 to 20 feet below the surface in the summer. Water is generally lifted by lowering a jar with a rope, but sometimes, though rarely, the cultivators use the lever-lift (*lātha*) of Bihār, which is weighted by a stone or lump of mud and is worked by one man. By this arrangement water can be lifted from a depth of 10 to 15 feet, and a man can irrigate one-third of a *bighā* in 8 hours.

Tanks, *jhils* or water channels are most often used for irrigation. No very large tanks are found, but tanks of moderate size and ponds abound. Most of the tanks are more or less silted up, and very few new tanks are being dug, for though their excavation and repair were formerly considered a religious duty incumbent on the well-to-do, this sense of obligation is dying out. The district is studded with numerous *jhils* or swamps, especially towards the south, and is intersected by a large number of streams (*khals*), all, however, more or less dead after the rains. Still, they constitute the chief source of supply for irrigation. Smaller streams are sometimes dammed up for irrigating the *boro* crops in thāna Khānākul, but little use is made of the rivers, the banks being generally too high and the water too far below the level of the fields.

Water-lifts.

Several kinds of water-lifts are used, of which the most common are the *siuni*, *dongā* and *teri*. The *siuni* is a thickly woven triangular bamboo basket, with four pieces of rope attached. Two men, each holding two ropes, stand at the mouth of the channel, dip the basket in the water, and then raise it to discharge its contents. If the water has to be raised more than 4 to 5 feet, another set of men work from a platform on a higher level. Two men can irrigate a *bighā* in about 8 hours. The *dongā* is a canoe-shaped wooden vessel, one end of which is placed at the mouth of the channel leading water to the field; the other end, *i.e.*, the pointed end, rests in the *jhil* or pond and is moved up and down by a rope. By this contrivance one man can irrigate a *bighā* of land in a day. The price of a *dongā* is Rs. 3

to Rs. 5. Iron *dongās* are now gradually coming into use; their price is Rs. 12 to Rs. 15. When the water has to be raised to a considerable height, the *teri* is used. This is a lever-lift worked by means of a pole with a rope attached at one end and a large earthen pot suspended at the other end. One man dips the pot into the water, and two more pull down the rope and raise the full pot to the surface. Two sets of three men each can in this way irrigate one and a half *bighā* in a day. The price of the apparatus is from Rs. 4 to Rs. 6.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS. The following table shows the normal acreage of the principal crops and the percentage of each to the normal net cropped area, according to statistics compiled by the Agricultural Department in 1907:—

NAME OF CROP.	Normal acreage.	Percentage on normal net cropped area.	NAME OF CROP.	Normal acreage.	Percentage on normal net cropped area.
Winter rice	276,700	62	Summer rice	6,800	2
Sugarcane	7,200	2	Wheat	2,400	1
Total *aghani* crops ...	2,83,900	64	Barley	1,800	......
Autumn rice	45,500	10	Gram	2,700	1
Other *bhādoi* cereals and pulses.	600	......	Other *rabi* cereals and pulses.	5,400	1 2
Other *bhādoi* food-crops.	2,600	1	Other *rabi* food-crops	10,300	......
Jute	55,500	12	Linseed	800	2
Til (*bhādoi*)	100	......	Rape and mustard ...	7,900	
Total *bhādoi* crops ...	1,04,300	23	*Til* (*rabi*)	1,000	......
Orchards and garden produce.	40,000	9	Other oilseeds ...	2,700	1
			Tobacco	3,300	1
			Late cotton	2,000	......
			Other *rabi* non-food crops.	1,800	......
Twice-cropped area ...	40,100	9	Total *rabi* crops ...	48,900	11

PRINCIPAL CROPS. *Rice.* Rice forms the staple crop of district, and is particularly well suited to the low damp lands, receiving an abundant rainfall, which make up the greater portion of Hooghly. Many varieties are grown, but the crops may be grouped under three main heads according to the harvest seasons, viz., *boro* or spring rice, *āus* (literally *āsu*, *i.e.*, quick, early) or autumn rice, and *āman* (also called *haimantik*) or winter rice.

Boro. *Boro* rice is ordinarily transplanted along the banks of marshes, or in very low lands which remain wet till well into summer. Ploughing is not required if the ground is of soft mud; otherwise one or two ploughings are given. It is sown in the nursery in November, transplanted in December, and reaped in April and May. This class of rice includes only coarse varieties, and the area of land which can be profitably reserved for its

cultivation is small. Only newly threshed grain will germinate properly, and the grain has to be prepared carefully before sowing in the nursery.

Aus. *Aus* rice is sown, chiefly broadcast, on *sunā* lands and preferably loamy soils. It is sown in the latter half of May and reaped in September. It is harvested while yet slightly green, for if allowed to ripen fully, it will shed some of its grain. besides which the straw, being brittle, is apt to get broken. It is often followed by a second crop of pulses or oilseeds. This crop, as a rule, yields only coarse varieties of rice, but a fine kind of *āus* has recently been introduced from the Central Provinces by the Agricultural Department, and its cultivation is gradually extending. Formerly *āus* was a fairly large crop, but of recent years it has been replaced to some extent by jute, which pays the cultivator better. On the other hand, owing to the price of jute having fallen and that of paddy and rice having gone up during the last two years, a considerable part of the land on which jute was grown two years ago was again put under rice last year (1908). In the sayings of Khanā we find several references to the autumn rice crop. *Auser bhui bele, pāter bhui ātāle. Vaishākher pratham jale, Asu dhān dwigun phale. Aus dhāner chāsh, lāge tin māsh, i.e.,* "The soil of *āus* is sandy, that of jute clayey. In the first rains of Baisākh (April-May), *āus* paddy yields double. The cultivation of *āus* paddy takes three months."

Winter rice. *Aman* rice yields the principal crop of the year. It is grown on lands lying below flood-level, except, of course, where the depth of water is so great as to preclude cultivation. To prepare the ground for the crop, the soil is frequently manured with cow-dung (20 to 50 baskets to a *bighā*), except in the lower lands where the manure would be dissipated in the water. After manuring, ploughing begins as soon as the soil has been sufficiently softened by rain, *i.e.*, towards the end of winter or the beginning of spring. There are generally four ploughs to a *bighā*, and four ploughings before sowing and planting. The clods are then pulverized by drawing a *mai* or harrow over them. *Aman* rice may be sown broadcast, but is more usually sown in a nursery and transplanted into the fields. It is sown in May and June, and is transplanted in the rains, chiefly in July and August. It cannot be sown broadcast if the ground remains under water, or if it dries up early, or has been newly broken up. The usual quantity of seed is 16 seers to a *bighā*, or if sown broadcast 10 seers. The labour required for transplanting varies according to the distance of the fields from the village, the depth of water and other circumstances, but on the average it takes a man five days

per *bighā*. Harvesting begins on high lands in November or December, and is mostly finished by the end of January. On the lower grounds it continues till the end of February, and sometimes till the middle of March. The reaping is easy enough till the low lands are reached after the *āwal*. The *doem* rice may be got in dry, but the *seyam* and *chāhāram* crops have generally to be reaped in water. In dry reaping the straw with the paddy is laid in bundles on the fields in order to dry it, and after two or three days it is carried home for threshing In wet reaping the heads of the stalks above water are cut and then carried to a dry spot for drying. Paddy reaped dry is usually threshed by beating the bundle against boards till all the grain is separated; the bundles of straw (*khar*) are then stored for sale or use. Paddy reaped wet is trampled out by oxen; the straw (*pal*) is useless except for feeding cattle. After threshing, the paddy is winnowed and stored in thatched granaries with split-bamboo walls (*marāis*).

The outturn naturally varies according to the nature of land, timely or untimely weather, and the care given to cultivation. On an average the outturn of *sāli āwal* winter rice per *bighā* is estimated at 7 to 10 maunds of paddy and one *kāhan* of straw; and of *sāli doem* at 5 to 8 maunds of paddy and the same quantity of straw. Some of the best lands, if manured, have been known to yield 12 maunds per *bighā*, but such a heavy yield is very rare. Generally speaking, the outturn, taken at the rate of 8 maunds of paddy and one *kāhan* of straw, would be worth in the selling season not more than Rs. 26 (24 + 2).

After rice, pulses are the most important of the food-grains. **Pulses.** Gram is grown on a small area, but other pulses, like *khesāri*, *mung*, peas and *masurī*, are favourite second crops. *Khesāri* or *teurā* is sown on *āus* land with barley, but more often on low rice lands, when the *āman* is damaged by floods or has a poor outturn. It is sown broadcast in October, grows slowly until the winter rice is harvested, then shoots up rapidly and is gathered in February and March. It costs little to cultivate, but the yield is not large if the rice crop is good. It is a grain which owing to its cheapness is much used, in the form of *dāl*, by the poorer classes, while the straw is an excellent fodder for cattle. The other pulses form the main cold-weather crops of *sunā* lands. They are sown in October and November after ploughing and are reaped in February and March. The ploughing is more carefully done, the seed costs more, and the outturn is more valuable, furnishing the *dāl* eaten by the higher classes. The *olanda* or European variety of pea is largely grown

near the railway line from Hooghly to Howrah, and the produce is sold at a high price for export to the Calcutta market.

Oil seeds. Oil seeds, such as linseed, *til*, rape and mustard, are cold-weather crops grown only in small plots on high lands round the villages and on river *chars* which are periodically fertilized by new silt.

Jute. Jute is the chief crop of Hooghly next to rice and has largely replaced *āus* rice, but, as stated above, there was a shrinkage of its area last year (1908). In most villages it is raised on *sunā* lands that are not occupied by sugarcane, vegetables or orchards. The ground is usually manured with cow-dung or rich muddy earth dug up from tanks or ditches. After the first showers in May, the ground is ploughed and the seed sown at the rate of about two seers per *bighā*. The fields are then weeded twice or thrice before the heavy rains begin. In August and September the jute is cut, stripped of its leaves, carried in bundles to some pool or stream, and there steeped. This steeping process is called "retting." After a time the stalks are taken out and beaten, so as to extract the fibre. The fibre is cleaned, dried by hanging, and then put into drums ready for the market, the dry stalks being used as fuel, for thatching, or for fencing betel-leaf plantations. The outturn varies according to circumstances, *e g.*, the condition of the fields, the quantity of manure and the care given to cultivation; but for first class land the average outturn may be taken roughly as 4 to 6 maunds of fibre, and 8 to 10 bundles of stalks (*pākāti*); and for second class land 3 to 5 maunds and the same quantity of stalks. Sheorāphuli is the principal centre of the jute trade in the district.

Sugarcane. Sugarcane is grown on *sunā* lands, preferably heavy clay soils retaining moisture. The ground is prepared by ploughing and harrowing. and also receives irrigation, if the soil is light and porous. It is next manured with oil-refuse, cow-dung and tank mud. In January top cuttings, half a foot long, are placed with oil-refuse in holes arranged in rows a yard apart. In the four months preceding the rains (February to June) the surface is irrigated several times, and after each watering is hoed. Just before the rains break, the ground round the roots is cleared, old leaves, etc., being removed, and manure laid at the roots, after which they are carefully earthed over. During the next five months (from the middle of June to the middle of November) the leaves are usually twisted round the stems to prevent insects or jackals damaging the plants. As soon as the plants are large enough, they are tied together with leaves at the top to prevent the flexible

stems falling down. Cutting begins in January and may continue till April. The chief varieties are Bombay, *shamsārā* and *deshi*, *shamsārā* being the favourite in this district. The cultivation is exhausting to the soil and expensive to the ryots. The crop is, therefore, alternated with paddy or jute in the following rains, and potatoes or pulses in the next winter, so that the soil has a rest for at least a year and a half. The old wooden mill has disappeared and has been replaced by an iron crusher and pan, often of the Bihiā pattern. A few of the canes are sold in the towns and rural *hāts*; but most are crushed in the villages and the juice converted into *gur* or molasses.

Tobacco and betel-leaf.

Tobacco is a minor product, chiefly grown along the river banks, on *chars*, and on the lands flooded by the spill water of the Dāmodar. Betel-leaf, which is more largely grown, is raised, especially by the Bārui caste, in bamboo enclosures with fences made of jute stalks. Betel grows best in a friable black clay resembling pond mud and containing a large amount of organic matter. The cuttings are planted in rows in February and watered daily for the first three months. The leaves begin to shoot in June and July, and continue to do so for a year. Old stems are cut down in April, when the roots send up fresh stems, which begin giving new leaves in June and July. In this way, fresh leaves may be got for several years; otherwise, the stems die in a year. The trailing plants have to be tied to supports of *dhonchā* stalks or split bamboo, and the soil manured from time to time with oil-refuse. The betel leaves of Begampur, a village a few miles west of Serampore, are well-known for their flavour, and are exported in considerable quantities.

FRUITS.

The principal fruits of the district are mango, plantain, cocoanut, jack, papaya, pine-apple and custard-apple. Groves of mango and jack abound, especially in the Sadar subdivision. There are numerous varieties of indigenous mangoes, which, though stringy, are generally sweet. In the orchards of the well-to-do grafts of Bombay, Fazli and Lengrā mangoes are common, which give fine fruit, though rather smaller in size than up-country specimens. The jack fruit usually has a stringy pulp, but the best varieties are sweet and luscious. Pine-apples are regularly cultivated in homestead plots. They are usually large and palatable. The papaya grows almost wild in every homestead, and is a welcome addition to the daily fare, being eaten when unripe as a vegetable, and when ripe, as a fruit. Plantains are cultivated on an extensive scale, both unripe and ripe varieties, the chief varieties of the latter being the religiously pure *kāthāli*, the small but delicious *chāmpā*, and the large *martābān* or

martamân. Immense quantities are sold at the Sheorāphuli market. Cocoanut and date palms thrive, yielding fruit, cocoanut oil and date sugar. Of acid fruits, limes and tamarind grow well. The *tarmuj* or water melon, in two varieties, viz., *dhamashi* and *deshi*, sown in November, is largely produced in the hot season, and is exported in considerable quantities to Calcutta and other places. It grows best on sandy loam; and the soil near the Saraswatī Khāl and along the bank of the Dāmodar is said to be peculiarly suited to its cultivation The cucumbers called *sashā* and *phuti* are also largely cultivated in the hot season in the beds of the Saraswatī and the Dāmodar. Leechees, *jām*, *gulāb-jām*, *jāmrul* and guava are found in gardens on the outskirts of the towns.

VEGETABLES. The district is noted for its large vegetable gardens, principally situated along the bank of the river Hooghly and the line of railway. Vegetables are also grown extensively round the villagers' homesteads and along the banks of the numerous *khāls* and streams.

Potatoes are largely cultivated along the old bed of the Saraswatī, Kānā and Kānā Dāmodar rivers, and in smaller quantities throughout the Sadar and Serampore subdivisions. Several varieties of potato are grown, which may be grouped under three heads, *deshi* or indigenous, Bombay and Naini Tāl. The places especially noted for the cultivation of the Bombay variety are Nālikul, Haripāl and Singur in the Serampore subdivision. The cultivation of potatoes was first introduced into Bengal by the English towards the close of the 18th century. For a long time the potato was objected to as an article of food by orthodox Brāhmans upon religious grounds—it is not admitted in the *bhoga* of the temple of Jagannāth ; but now all who can afford to do so eat it without scruple

The egg plant called *baigun* or brinjal (Solanum melongena) is a favourite vegetable. The seed is first sown in a nursery near the house of the cultivator in April and May, the young shoots being transplanted a month later, after a good shower, into a field which has been well ploughed and manured; they are planted in rows two or three feet distant from each other. The plants soon grow into shrubs about two feet in height, and are in bearing from October to about the following March, when they are cut down. A crop of *baigun* is very exhausting to the powers of the land, and cannot be grown on the same field for more than two years in succession. The variety of *baigun* called *muktakeshi* is considered the best. The finest kind of *baigun* is produced on the banks of the Dāmodar.

The cucurbitaceous plant called *patol* (Trichosanthes dioica) is largely cultivated in all its varieties, viz., *penro*, *deshi* and *dhali*. Sandy loam is the best land for it, and it is extensively grown on river banks and *chars*. Sown in October, it yields fruit from the latter part of February to the end of September. The leaves of the plant, called *paltā*, are eaten with curry; and an infusion of the leaves is frequently prescribed by native physicians as an anti-bilious draught. Pumpkins are cultivated to a considerable extent, being generally grown near the house, with a thatch for the creeper to spread over. Occasionally the creepers are trained over the roofs of the houses, and it is no uncommon thing to see the thatch of a hut almost covered with enormous pumpkins. There are two varieties of *kumrā* (Benicasa cerifera), viz., *deshi* or *chāl kumrā* and *bilāti kumrā*. The latter variety, which is considered to be the best, is largely cultivated in the western part of the district bordering on the Dāmodar river, and is exported in considerable quantities to towns along the Hooghly and to Calcutta. *Sakar-kand* or sweet potatoes are grown on sandy soils, being hardy plants growing on lands that will hardly favour any other crop. The yams called *mān kachu* and *gunri kachu* are also cultivated, the latter largely in homestead gardens, besides the arum known as *ol*.

Cabbages were only introduced into the district about half a century ago, and they are still mostly grown from imported seed. For a long period the upper classes of Hindus had a great objection to eating them; but this prejudice has almost entirely died away, and cabbages are now a favourite article of food with a large portion of the population. Radishes are grown in October on high, well-drained, sandy loam, which should be repeatedly ploughed and harrowed, as the saying runs:—*Satek chāse mulā*, *i.e.*, a hundred ploughings for radish. Turnips are also cultivated, but are eaten chiefly by Europeans and Muhammadans. This is the most recently introduced of European vegetables, and Hindus have not yet become accustomed to it as an article of food. Other common vegetables are onions, garlic, peas, beet, cauliflowers, beans, ginger and turmeric.

MISCELLANEOUS PRODUCTS.

Among miscellaneous products may be mentioned chillies grown on homestead lands, and often on newly formed alluvion; mulberries grown in the south of the Arāmbāgh subdivision; bamboos grown in the compounds of most households; and the *hoglā* reed, which is plentiful on the banks of the many marshes and swamps in the district. Indigo was formerly cultivated in the south, but all the factories have long since been abandoned.

EXTENSION OF CULTIVATION.

Figures showing changes in the cultivated area for any lengthy period cannot be given, as the agricultural statistics of Howrah were incorporated with those of Hooghly until 1905-06. It appears, however, to be an admitted fact that nearly all the land at present cultivable has been brought under the plough and that very little is left fallow. It would seem, moreover, that the area cultivated with rice and jute is steadily increasing. The lands reclaimed by the Dânkuni and Râjāpur drainage schemes have been almost exclusively devoted to winter paddy, and the *sunā* lands that grew autumn rice to jute. Sugarcane cultivation, which increased a little on the introduction of iron roller mills, is declining owing to the competition of imported sugar and molasses. Owing to the steady rise in the demand for and the price of vegetables and fruits, their cultivation is, on the whole, increasing. The returns submitted annually since 1901-02 show certain variations in the area under cultivation and under different crops. Firstly, the cultivated area has increased even in these few years. Though this may be partly due to more accurate preparation of the returns, the greater part is a real increase. There has been some expansion in the area under winter rice, but more in the area under jute, which has more or less replaced autumn rice, and partly also in the area occupied by mustard, miscellaneous food-crops, and orchards and garden produce. Secondly, the cultivation of *til* (sesamum) appears only in the returns during recent years. Thirdly, the acreage under linseed and sugarcane is nearly stationary, if not decreasing. Lastly, the area under pulses and miscellaneous non-food crops has largely decreased.

AGRICULTURAL METHODS.

The ryots of the Hooghly district, especially the Kaibarttas and Sadgops among the Hindus and a number of Sheikhs among the Muhammadans, are industrious and intelligent cultivators; and in the case of the immemorial crops of Bengal, such as rice and pulses, it is doubtful whether their ordinary methods of cultivation can be improved upon. In 1886 Mr. A. C. Sen, who had then lately returned from the Cirencester College, England, and had been deputed to make agricultural enquiries in the Burdwān Division, reported: "Very little can be suggested for the improvement of the cultivation of paddy, which has been so long under cultivation in Bengal, and grown under such varied conditions, that, taking the country as a whole, the ryot's knowledge regarding this important crop has attained a degree of perfection almost unprecedented in the history of agriculture."

The agricultural implements in common use are few in number and simple in construction. They are as follows :—(1) *Lāngal* or plough, with its different parts named *murā* or body, *isha* or beam, *phāl* or share, *bontā* or hilt. When in use the plough has a *joāl* or yoke, with an *ajkra* or rope. A smaller variety is used for ploughing the fields of *āus* paddy and maize, when the plants are a foot to a foot and a half high. (2) *Kodāli* or hoe, which is in constant use for the cultivation of special crops like sugarcane, potato, cabbage, etc., for turning up of the soil to any depth, and for making field ridges. (3) *Mai* or harrow, which consists merely of a piece of bamboo split in the middle with cross-pieces like a ladder. It is used for breaking up clods, pressing down the soil, levelling the ground and clearing it of weeds. It is drawn by bullocks, the driver standing on it in order to give it weight. (4) *Bidā* or rake, a wooden bar about 4 feet long, with a few bamboo or iron tins attached. It is used chiefly to thin out the plants of *āus* which has been sown broadcast, to stir the soil, and to clear it of weeds. (5) *Phor* or weeding hook. (6) *Pashuni*, a hand hoe. (7) *Kāste*, a sickle for reaping. The improved type of plough called the Sibpur plough, which is simple in make, is cheap, and ploughs deeper than the country plough, is used by some ryots, but there is no other noticeable innovation so far as implements of cultivation are concerned. Bihiā mills and iron pans are now extensively used for the manufacture of molasses, but these do not come properly under the head of cultivation. Implements.

Rotation of crops is practised and its value understood to a certain extent. The ryots know that certain crops, such as sugarcane and betel-leaf, are exhausting, and that the land must be kept fallow and given rest. Also, on high land they alternate *āus* paddy or jute with pulses, oilseeds or vegetables like potatoes; but an exception is made in the case of paddy, *āman* being sown year after year on the same field. Rotation.

The ryots are generally careless about the selection of seed. A part of the produce is kept apart for the next crop, but nothing is done to exclude weak or diseased seed. Lately, however, the advantage of reserving the best specimens has begun to be appreciated, and the cultivators are gradually taking more trouble over selecting seed, especially in the case of imported crops, such as wheat, potatoes and European vegetables. In gardens belonging to the richer classes, moreover, care is taken to have seeds of good varieties, or to secure grafts of good fruit trees. Seed.

The advantage of manure is fairly well known in this district. The manures in general use are cow-dung, oil-cakes, pond-mud Manures.

and hide-salt. Every ryot has his dung-heap, to which he daily adds dung, wood-ashes, waste straw, vegetable refuse, etc.—in fact, all that escapes the pariah dog. The urine of cattle, a valuable manure, is, however, allowed to soak into the mud floor of the cow-shed, though the earth is occasionally dug out and used for manure. Cow-dung is used to a more or less extent for all the crops except pulses. It is carried to the fields in April and May, is first placed in heaps at intervals, and then spread over the fields. For potato cultivation it is applied to the fields in August and September. Castor and mustard oil-cake is now largely used for potatoes, sugarcane, ginger and cabbages. Pond-mud is considered a valuable manure and is most commonly applied to plantations of betel, mulberry and plantain. In a year of drought, the mud taken from the half dry ponds and tanks is applied extensively. Hide-salt, a cheap nitrogenous manure, is occasionally used to check an exuberant growth of leaves, and for paddy when suffering from the disease called *kādāmarā*, which is itself the result of excessive manuring with pond-mud. Green manuring is not unknown in the district, *e.g.*, in rice fields the soil, with the weeds in it, is turned over with a *kodāli*, and in a number of instances leguminous plants, such as *dhainchā*, *san* and indigo, are used to enrich the soil. Nitrogenous salts are little used, and would be practically useless for the most important crop, viz., *āman* rice, as they would be washed away when the land is submerged.

CATTLE. The cattle of the district are of the same breeds as elsewhere in Lower Bengal. Cows and she-buffaloes are kept for trading purposes by Goālās, and cows and plough-bullocks by ryots generally. A few ponies are kept, chiefly by Muhammadans and up-country people; while the former and the lowest castes of Hindus tend fowls, ducks, goats and sheep. A few sheep are grazed in thāna Panduā for the Calcutta market. Pigs are bred chiefly by the Kaorās, a very low caste.

The oxen of the district appear to belong to a breed indigenous to Bengal, though it is impossible to say how long it has been domesticated. The breed appears to be more or less pure; but in the towns some intermixture has probably taken place with the Bhāgalpur breed and occasionally with other up-country breeds. The latter are not liked by the cultivators, as they are less hardy in this damp climate, eat more than double and do only half as much work again with the light country ploughs. A pair of good country bullocks is considered sufficient for 20 to 25 *bighās* sown with paddy, but of course this is dependent on a variety of other considerations. The cattle in the west are believed to be superior to those in the east, a

difference attributed to the difference in the climate. In the west buffaloes are sometimes employed for field work. They are stronger and work quicker than the oxen, but they cannot stand heat, and after 9 A. M. they are difficult to manage.

The margin of cultivation being so narrow, the cattle graze in the fields after the crops have been removed or pick up what they can in the open. On returning home they get a little green grass, some straw and about half a seer of oil-cake. During the ploughing season some additional straw and a little oil-cake are often given to the working bullocks after midday. Grazing grounds are few and far between; in this connection, Mr. Carstairs remarked, as far back as 1883, in his report on the condition of the ryots in part of Chandītalā thānā:--"Rich men's cattle can go in gardens, but poor men's cattle have been deprived of their old common grazing grounds. These have been appropriated and rented out to cultivators by the zamīndārs. The ryot turns his cattle into the paddy fields in the cold weather, but they pick a very scanty living up there. I only note here that the shutting up of the grazing grounds increases the expenses of the ryot, because he has to keep more food for the bullocks; because the want of freedom weakens the cattle and makes them less fit for work, and because they are more likely to fall victims to disease, and he will then have to buy new cattle ... The *āils* or boundary ridges of fields used to be wide and suitable for the ryot's walking along to his fields and very useful for grazing cattle on. They are now little mud threads. High rents and measurement have done this. No ryot can afford to leave so much land uncultivated. He cuts in on one side, and his neighbour has to resist or cut in on the other. I have seen cases where a man encroached on an *āil* and the ryot holding the field on the other side objected. But things like this are very difficult to check, for the mischief is done by inches. Pasturage.

"In all these matters it is the interest (possibly not real, but immediate) of the zamīndār to let the mischief go on. If a man cultivates part of a grazing ground, rent is demanded. If he appropriates part of a road, this is assessed. If he encroaches on the *āil*, he cultivates all the more, and it is included in his *jot*. He will be all the more content to pay high rates. The zamīndār does not usually live in the village. Want of roads or grazing grounds there does not put him to personal inconvenience. He may be as good a man as John Gilpin, but with him, too, 'loss of pence' is the main consideration."

CHAPTER VIII.

NATURAL CALAMITIES.

FLOODS. THE district, being a low-lying tract with an abundant rainfall and intersected by three large rivers and numerous smaller streams, suffers more frequently from floods than from drought. Formerly floods were not only of frequent occurrence, but were also attended by great loss of life and property, especially during freshets, when the water in the rivers was banked up by strong southerly gales or high spring tides. Early records show that about 1660 A.D., a strong freshet in the Hooghly river swept away the old Dutch factory in Hooghly town; while on 3rd September 1684 the river rose so high that it was 3 or 4 feet above the level of the Hooghly Bazar and swept away more than a thousand huts in the Dutch quarters at Chinsura.* Such destructive inundations have been rare during the period of British rule, probably because the level of the west bank of the Hooghly has been gradually raised.

The Dāmodar has been much more mischievous than the Hooghly, and there is record of its ravages for more than a century past. On the 16th Aswin (about 1st October) in 1787, we find that the Dāmodar burst through its bank near "Barderee" and swept away "*hāts*, temples, *ganjes* and *golāhs*.†" On the 26th September 1823 it again rose in high flood and bursting over its banks inundated the country up to the Hooghly river, which also rose to an unprecedented height. Chandernagore suffered considerably; in the streets of Serampore boats were plying, the College being surrounded by water; and in Hooghly town, Dharampur, Māllā Kāsim's *hāt* and Bāli were submerged and the roads rendered impassable. In the mofussil the police thānas of Rājbalhāt (now Kristanagar) and Benipur (now Balāgarh) were swept away, and the police officers had to take refuge in boats. The homeless villagers poured into the town of Hooghly, where they found shelter in sheds erected on the site of

---

* T. Bowrey, *Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, 1669—1679, p. 170; Hedges' *Diary*, Yule, 1, vol. I.

† Calcutta Gazette, 11th October 1787, Selections, 1, 210.

the Mughal fort (the old court house).* The distress which ensued may be gathered from the report that "the extent of injury that has been sustained is beyond human relief." Ten years later, on the 21st May 1833, the Dāmodar again flooded the district, washing away the bridges over the Saraswatī at Tribenī and over the Magrā *Khāl* at Nayāsarai. Subsequently, in August 1844, the Dāmodar burst its banks and marginal embankments in 170 places and submerged the whole country between Bāli Dīwānganj and Dhaniākhāli, the flood water spreading as far as Hooghly and Chinsura and filling up the ditches and drains of those towns. In September 1845 the Dāmodar again flooded the south of the district. The Burdwān and Chandernagore roads were under water in many places, and the four suspension bridges were threatened with destruction. The inner or zamīndāri *bāndhs* were so completely destroyed, that their owners never attempted to repair them; after the floods not a stalk of paddy was to be seen for many miles; and the inundation was described by one officer as "frightful." A drought following the flood intensified the distress, and people began to migrate to Calcutta and Serampore for work; but, beyond advances of Rs. 500 to each of the Subdivisional Magistrates of Dwārhāttā (now Serampore) and Jahānābād for the relief of urgent cases of distress, no relief measures were deemed necessary.

The continued ravages of the Dāmodar attracted the attention of Government, and after protracted enquiries extending over several years the embankments on the left bank were strengthened, while those on the right bank were abandoned for a distance of 20 miles. Its flood water consequently poured over the western tract in thānas Jahānābād and Khānākul, destructive inundations occurring in this locality in August 1856, in July 1859 (over 267 square miles), in 1867, and in August 1885. The flood last mentioned was due to a continuous downpour of rain, which not only submerged the rice crops in the fields, but also caused high floods in the Hooghly, Rūpnārāyan, Dāmodar and Dwārakeswar rivers. The embankments were breached, and nearly the whole country laid under water. In the eastern portion of thānas Jahānābād (now Arāmbāgh) and Khānākul, the floods lasted for many days, whilst in several places they did not subside for over a month. It is an extraordinary fact that no loss of life from drowning was reported, but the health of the people suffered considerably, for cholera broke out in some villages and malarial fever prevailed. The damage done to the crops of the affected tracts was most serious, the rice crop over an area of

* Selections from Calcutta Gazette, vol. V, pp. 557—60; Toynbee's *Sketch*, p. 141.

about 233 square miles being damaged or almost entirely destroyed. Over two thousand houses were reported to have fallen, and half as many more were badly damaged, the inmates betaking themselves for shelter to the houses of their more fortunate neighbours. The after effects on the flooded lands varied very much in different places. A fertilizing deposit of muddy silt overspread many villages, but a deep layer of barren sand buried the cultivable soil of others. Government granted a sum of Rs. 1,000 to relieve the most urgent cases of distress, and the Calcutta Central Committee contributed Rs. 2,000 towards the same object, while Rs. 2,000 were advanced under the Agriculturists Loans Act. The Public Works Department expended considerable sums in repairing the breaches in the embankments, and the Road Cess Committee allotted Rs. 3,000 for the repair of village roads in the flooded tracts. These measures saved the labouring classes from any prolonged distress.

A few years later the Dâmodar pouring through the Beguā breach in Burdwān scoured out a new channel for itself 2 to 3 miles west of its old bed.

During the present century high floods in the Dāmodar were reported in September 1900, September 1901 and July 1905. The heavy rainfall from 27th to 29th July 1905 caused high freshets in both the Dāmodar and the Dwārakeswar. Their overflow inundated thānas Arāmbāgh and Khānākul, damaged more than 600 houses and destroyed the winter rice, while the Dwārakeswar flooded the town of Arambāgh. It must be remembered, however, that the loss of winter rice in this tract is largely counterbalanced by excellent *rabi* crops, and in thāna Khānākul by extensive crops of *boro* paddy, the water for which is stored by means of dams across the river beds.

The Hooghly and Serampore subdivisions are now protected from river floods by embankments along the Dāmodar and by the high western bank of the Hooghly river, but they are liable to suffer from the accumulation of water caused by excessive local rainfall, when the water, being unable to find an outlet into the rivers, which are themselves at a high level, and being inadequately carried off by the silted-up drainage channels, sweeps over the low-lying fields and damages the standing crops. The abnormal rainfall of July 1905, for instance, submerged parts of thānas Dhaniākhāli, Polbā and Hooghly for several days, and damaged the winter rice crop to the extent of eight annas in thānas Chanditalā and Singur in the Serampore subdivision.

FAMINES. Famines of 18th century.

Very little is known of any famines in this district prior to the period of British rule, *e.g.*, there is no record of its being affected by the terrible famine of 1671, which decimated Bihār and in which more than 100,000 persons are said to have died in Patna town and its suburbs alone.* Scarcity appeared in 1710, and culminated in a famine the following year, which probably affected Hooghly; for it is stated that several thousand persons died in the interior for want of food, while in Calcutta the English East India Company distributed 500 maunds of rice among the poor and made special arrangements for importing rice from cheaper marts.†

Coming to the British period, Hooghly, in common with other parts of Bengal, suffered from the great famine of 1769-70. This is evident from the account of the Dutch Admiral Stavorinus, who visited Chinsura in 1769, and wrote:—"The dire effects of famine, too, were felt in Bengal. At Chinsura a woman, taking her two small children in her arms, plunged into the Ganges and drowned herself, not possessing or being able to procure anything to satisfy the raging hunger of her tender offspring. The banks of the river were covered with dying people; some of whom, unable to defend themselves, though still alive, were devoured by the jackals This happened in the town of Chinsura itself, where a poor sick Bengalese, who had laid himself down in the street, without any assistance being offered to him by anybody, was attacked in the night by the jackals and devoured alive . . . This dreadful calamity was occasioned, partly by the failure of the rice-harvest the preceding year, but it may chiefly be attributed to the monopoly which the English had made of the rice, which was reaped the season before, and which they now held at so high a price that the natives, most of whom could earn no more than one, or one and a half, stiver (penny) per day, out of which they had to maintain a wife and children, could not buy, for this trifle of money, the tenth part of the rice they wanted, the consequences of which were that whole families perished miserably."‡ This account of the mortality is confirmed by the fact that in 1772 the Governor-General in Council reported the mortality in Bengal as "at least one third of the inhabitants of the province."§

* T. Bowrey, *Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, 1669—1679, p. 226 and note 2.

† *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Wilson, I, p. 333; II, pp. 15, 36.

‡ J. S. Stavorinus, *Voyages to the East Indies*, I, pp. 152-3.

§ Letter to the Court of Directors, 3rd November 1772, l.c., Hunter's *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 381.

In the following decade the famine of 1783 affected Hooghly only indirectly; but the famine of 1788, in which 70,000 persons are said to have died in Eastern Bengal, caused considerable distress, especially as in 1787 several *parganas* (then within the Burdwān Collectorate) had suffered from a storm and inundation. In July 1788 4,000 persons were in daily receipt of relief in Calcutta, and the Rājā of Burdwān filed a petition pleading his inability to pay his arrears of revenue in consequence of the calamitous state of his district.*

amines 19th ntury.

Since then the district has not suffered from any widespread general famine, though there have been periods of distress, as in 1834, 1837 and 1845, when some scarcity ensued from droughts succeeding floods. The worst of these years was 1837, when the price of food-grains rose 50 per cent. in spite of large importations from Purneā, Dinājpur and the United Provinces, while crimes and dacoities increased owing to distress among the lower classes. No relief measures of a special nature were, however, found necessary.

amine of 366.

Hooghly does not appear to have suffered severely from the drought of 1865, but the imports being curtailed by the failure of crops in adjoining areas, the price of rice was greatly enhanced. The scarcity and distress were severest in the west of the district, in thāna Jahānābād, where the failure of the crops was most general, and where there was a large non-agricultural population of the weaver caste. Here the distress was intensified by a flood in the rainy season of 1866 and by the number of destitute persons who flocked in from the western districts. Elsewhere the prosperous condition of the peasantry enabled them to tide over the famine without suffering the extremity of misery experienced in the neighbouring district of Midnapore. In August relief centres were opened at seven places in the Jahānābād subdivision, and in September two more were opened at Panduā and Mahānād in the east of the district. At Chinsura a committee of Indian gentlemen raised subscriptions to the extent of Rs. 6,000 and daily fed all paupers seeking relief from the 14th July to the 16th October. The aggregate number of paupers thus relieved is reported to have exceeded 100,000. The funds of the committee became exhausted in the middle of October, and were then supplemented by a grant of Rs. 1,000 from the Board of Revenue. At Uttarpārā and Serampore also measures were organized by several Indian gentlemen for supplying food,

* *Bengal MSS. Records of Board of Revenue*, vol. I, pp. 89, 149, 150, 154; *cf.* Selections from Calcutta Gazette, vol. I, p. 26.

clothing and medical assistance to the indigent, without assistance from the Government. A relief hospital was opened in Hooghly and a temporary pauper hospital at Uttarpārā. Including Chandrakonā and Ghātāl, which were then part of the district, the average daily number of persons in receipt of relief in the district was reported to be 645 in July, 3,242 in August, 6,741 in September, 7,041 in October, 5,041 in November and 1,041 in December.

Famine of 1874.

The famine of 1874 did not affect Hooghly severely, the distress being confined to the north of the district. Relief works were started, but the maximum daily average number of persons employed was only 1,911 in April 1874. Altogether, Rs. 2,20,000 were spent in charitable relief, the highest daily average of persons receiving charitable relief or employed in light labour being 50,234 in September. Since then there has been some local distress in Arāmbāgh subdivision in 1883 and 1897 due to a partial failure of the crops.

Liability to famine.

The above sketch shows that the part of the district most liable to scarcity consists of thānas Arāmbāgh and Khānākul, which are exposed to the floods of the Dāmodar almost every year. Even here, however, the peasants are generally compensated for the damage caused by floods by splendid crops of *rabi* and *boro*, which thrive on the silt-enriched lands. The other two subdivisions are protected by embankments, and receive an abundant rainfall. Winter rice is the main crop, but it is supplemented by numerous other crops, such as *rabi*, vegetables or jute; while fruit orchards are numerous along the banks of rivers and streams. The facility of transport by road, rail and river enables local produce to be brought to convenient marts; and the demand for it, caused by the proximity of Calcutta and other riparian towns, enables it to be sold at a good price. A large number of labourers also find employment in the mills, while there is an ever-increasing demand for labour in other industrial concerns along the banks of the Hooghly. The combined result is that the lower classes are exceptionally well equipped with powers of resistance against scarcity.

EARTHQUAKES.

The earliest earthquake of which there is any record during the period of British rule occurred on 6th September 1803, and shocks were felt in 1811, 1842, 1853 and 1869. The severest shocks occurred on 14th July 1885, when the semaphore tower at Niāli fell down, and on 12th June 1897, when a few houses were destroyed.

CYCLONES.

The district does not lie within the regular track of cyclones and cyclonic storms. Those that do occur are few in number and

burst either in May or June, when they precede the south-west monsoon. or more often in October-November, when the south-west monsoon is retreating. These cyclonic formations, though generating in the Bay of Bengal, are to be distinguished from the usual south-west monsoon storms that bring rain to Bengal and from the land storms of July and the winter months (December to March).

The two most violent cyclones, of which there are recorded accounts, were that of 5th October 1864, which wrecked the port of Calcutta and brought down the tower of the Hooghly Church, and that of 15th and 16th October 1874, which, passing from Midnapore northwards, swept over the Jahānābād subdivision, killing nine persons and a large number of cattle. Among other notable cyclones and cyclonic storms, may be mentioned that of 21st May 1833, which lasted for six hours and drove up a large mass of salt water from the south; that occurring in June 1842, which wrecked a fleet of Government arsenal boats; that of 9th June 1869, which lasted for nearly a whole day; and that of 27th November 1901. In the pre-British period a hurricane on 11th and 12th October 1737 is said to have sunk 20,000 boats in the Hooghly and to have killed 300,000 persons, but the numbers quoted seem much exaggerated. Tornadoes occur but rarely; but one that crossed Bhadreswar on 23rd April 1888 killed twelve persons.

DROUGHTS. Droughts are usually caused by the premature cessation of rains in September and October. They are infrequent in this district, but have been reported in the years 1834, 1837, 1845, 1865, 1867 and 1896, and also during the last two or three years. They affect the winter rice crop seriously and thus cause some temporary distress; but, on the other hand, they tend to make the district healthier by decreasing dampness and water-logging.

BLIGHTS AND PESTS. The crops suffer much from blights, and though a general blight is unknown, almost every year one crop or other is affected in some particular locality. Flights of locusts are fortunately rare, and do not make their appearance more than once in ten years. They generally travel from the north-east and cause a little injury to the crops, but seldom or never destroy them on a large scale. Comparatively little damage is caused by wild animals, but wild pig dig up sugarcane and sweet potatoes, wantonly destroying more than they eat, while jackals also do damage to sugarcane and hares to its young shoots.

Insects, however, often damage the crops very seriously, and their number is legion. Both *āus* and *āman* plants are sometimes attacked by a mosquito-like insect and are liable to a number of

other insect pests. In the case of *āman* paddy, an insect called *shānki pokā* eats away the tender leaves of the young plant, disappearing only with heavy rain. When the ears are being formed, a black fly occasionally attacks them in immense numbers, 50 to 100 being often counted on a single ear. In 1908 the *āus* paddy was attacked by an insect which apparently was produced by the superabundant moisture in the fields. The insects were destroyed or driven away by sprinkling a small quantity of kerosene oil over the fields. Sugarcane is sometimes injured by white-ants, just after planting, and a little later the buds below the stalk are eaten away by a small grub called *majerā*. When grown, the canes are bored through by an insect that passes one stage of its life-history within the stem. The great enemy to plantains is a large black insect named *anto-pokā*, which nestles on the crown of the root-stock and causes the plant to die.

Potatoes sometimes suffer much injury from a species of red ant, which makes holes through the tuber. Red ants also kill young brinjal plants, and the nursery seedlings are now and then attacked by green grubs resembling those which attack cabbages. Thread-like worms often grow inside the roots of sweet-potatoes, injuring the plants. In cloudy weather thousands of small yellowish-green flies lay their eggs on pea pods, which grow into caterpillars that eat up almost the entire substance of the pods. The leaves and buds of young *til* (sesamum) plants are sometimes eaten away by a black insect named *thikre pokā;* and young *san* plants are attacked by a green caterpillar resembling that found on cabbages.

Vegetable growths are a serious danger to crops and plants on lands which have not received an early ploughing. The *āman* paddy crops are subject to a disease called *kādā-marā* (literally mud-killing), in the course of which a minute vegetable growth surrounds the lower part of the plant and destroys it in a few days. Fungi also injure the *āman* crops in years of excessive rainfall, when the field has not been properly ploughed. The Bombay sugarcane, a soft juicy variety, has practically gone out of cultivation owing to a disease called *dhasā* which appeared 40 to 50 years ago. The disease is said to have been due to fermentation induced by microscopic vegetable growth in the plant, which reduced it to a rotten mass emitting a most disagreeable odour. The Bombay species has now been generally replaced by a hardier variety, the *sāmshārā*. The name *dhasā* is also given to a dreaded potato disease which causes the roots to rot, after which the plant withers. It is very probably propagated through

the tubers, and is much aggravated by continuous heavy showers and high temperature in August and September. Hundreds of potato fields are totally destroyed by it, causing heavy loss to the cultivator. Brinjal plants sometimes suffer from a disease, called *tulsī-marā* because it causes the leaves to become like the leaves of the *tulsī* plant. Betel is subject to many diseases of a fungoid nature, some of which attack the leaves only and others the stalk and the whole plant. Of these, the *āngāre*, which causes the joints to turn black and rot, is especially injurious.

CHAPTER IX.

CANALS, DRAINAGE AND EMBANKMENTS.

CANALS. Eden Canal.

Canal irrigation in this district is carried on from streams which have been utilized for irrigation by letting water into them from the Eden Canal in the Burdwān district. This canal, which is named after a former Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Ashley Eden, who opened it in December 1881, takes off from the Dāmodar above Burdwān town and falls into the Kānā Nadī and Kānā Dámodar at Jamālpur. From it the water of the Dāmodar is passed by means of weirs and sluices into several silted-up channels, such as the Kantul, Ghiā, Kānā (or Kunti) and Kānā Dāmodar. The Eden Canal is classified as a work for which neither capital nor revenue accounts are kept, and was constructed in order to bring a supply of fresh water for sanitary purposes from the Dāmodar river into the natural channels and old river beds of the Burdwān and Hooghly districts; for those districts having been visited in 1861-62 by a severe and highly fatal epidemic of fever which was attributed to the stagnant and insanitary condition of the water-courses. In 1873 the first step towards the construction of the canal was taken by opening out the head of the Kānā Nadī, and in 1874 cuts were made connecting this channel with the Kānā Dāmodar and Saraswatī. The work was carried out piecemeal, and the complete scheme consisted of (1) a head sluice at Jujuti, admitting the water of the Dāmodar to the Bānkā Nullah; (2) a weir in the Bānkā Nullah at Kānchannagar, with a head sluice admitting the water to the Eden Canal, which, after a course of about 20 miles roughly parallel to the Dāmodar river, delivered the water into the Kānā Dāmodar and Kānā Nadī at Jamālpur, and (3) various subsidiary works. There are also a cut connecting the Kānā Nadī with the Saraswatī near Gopālnagar, with the necessary regulating works, and two distributaries, which were constructed about the year 1896.

The scheme was designed as a work of sanitary improvement, and not as an irrigation project; but the practice of irrigating from the canal sprang up very soon after

the canal was opened. In 1882 a great demand for water arose and 20,000 acres of rice were irrigated by flow from the canal, while in the two following years the acreage rose to 40,000 and 70,000 acres, respectively. So far, no water-rates had been charged, but it had by this time become evident that a system of irrigation on this scale could not be carried on without involving Government in great expense on account of silt-clearing, management, distribution and other details of maintenance and construction. Irrigation was effected from the system of natural channels and *nadīs*, as well as from the canal itself, and the rights of Government in the beds of these channels were not established. A lengthy discussion ensued as to how expenses were to be recouped. It was proposed that the zemīndārs interested should subscribe, but they failed to agree. In 1886 definite proposals were made by the Commissioner for the entertainment of a small special revenue establishment and the levying of a water-rate at 4 annas a *bighā* (*i.e.*, $12\frac{1}{10}$th annas per acre). Water was to be supplied on agreements: but as agreements for a sufficient acreage (about 53,000 acres) were not received, the matter still remained unsettled, though some water was supplied.

While the course to be adopted was still under discussion, a tentative system was introduced by the Executive Engineer and his subordinates, under which water was supplied under private agreements, entered into with representatives of the villages, on the condition that a number of continuous villages submitted applications for water, stating the area to be irrigated and paying the water-rates in advance, excess areas irrigated being paid for subsequently. The scheme succeeded and developed into the present system of irrigation. Water-rate rules under the provisions of the Irrigation Act were issued in 1893, and revised rules appeared in 1898. Under these rules provision is made for the supply of water on the long-lease system, season leases being also allowed and other areas supplied by single waterings. The system of advance payments, except for *rabi* and single waterings, has disappeared.

The annual receipts averaged Rs. 26,594 in the three years 1902-03 to 1904-05, and Rs. 23,385 in the three following years 1905-06 to 1907-08; while the annual expenditure averaged Rs. 39,359 and Rs. 32,394, respectively, thus resulting in a deficit. The area irrigated averaged 27,535 acres in the first triennium, and 22,854 acres in the second (1905-06 to 1907-8). The decrease is due to intentional restriction of the irrigated area on account of the uncertainty of the supply

from the head sluice at Jujuti: a scheme is under consideration for the increase of the supply by the construction of a weir across the Dāmodar river.

Apart from its utility for irrigation, this work has proved beneficial, from a sanitary point of view, to the villages on the banks of the channels which it flushes, as it ensures a supply of fresh water from the running stream of the Dāmodar.

Canalization of the Kausikī. In December 1894 the District Board submitted a scheme for the canalization of another dead river, the Kausikī, 18¾ miles long, and asked Government for a contribution of half the cost. The Government expressed its willingness to undertake the work on payment of half the cost, but, the estimate having been raised to Rs. 72,000, the Board gave up the proposal. The scheme was revived on the application of the late Bābu Bāmācharan Bhar of Haripāl, a wealthy Calcutta merchant, who generously offered a contribution of Rs. 30,000, and subsequently raised his offer to Rs. 35,000. The project has recently been sanctioned by Government, the estimated cost being Rs. 60,259, and the work is under construction. The District Board has contributed Rs. 8,500 towards the cost, and the balance is to be paid by Government. Schemes for canalizing other silted-up channels are also being considered.

DRAINAGE.

Dānkuni drainage works. The only drainage works lying entirely in the district are those designed for the drainage of the Dānkuni marshes. These marshes, which are about 12 miles long from north to south, are situated in the Serampore subdivision. They consist of a chain or series of *jhils*, *i.e.*, swamps wholly or partially covered with water, which lie between the Hooghly and Saraswatī rivers. The total area of land between these rivers is about 70 square miles, of which 8 square miles drain direct into the Hooghly, while 62 square miles form a basin, in the central part of which are the Dānkuni *jhils* occupying an area of 27 square miles. This latter area was not only a reservoir for the rainfall which falls over the 62 square miles, but the lowest part was nine feet below high-water level during the rainy season; and prior to its being drained, when the Hooghly was in flood, the tides flowed through the Baidyabāti and Bally Khals and raised the level of water in the *jhils* to 15 feet in the month of August, the beds of the *jhils* being about seven feet above mean sea-level. The area of cultivated land varied with the seasons, the minimum being 10½ square miles and the maximum 27 square miles, but a part of this doubtful zone was irregularly cultivated with cold weather crops

The ravages of Burdwān fever having drawn attention to the unhealthy state of the district, Mr. Adley, C.E., was deputed by

Government in 1869 to report whether want of drainage had caused or intensified the prevailing fever, and if so, how it could be rectified. Mr. Adley submitted two reports to Government, dated the 25th June and 10th September 1869, and the principal conclusions he came to were the following :—(1) that the district stood in much need of drainage; (2) that this in a great measure represented the cause of the fever scourge; (3) that the rivers and *khāls* had seriously silted up and deteriorated; (4) that, from an engineering point of view, there was no difficulty about the drainage question; and (5) that if properly conducted, the measures ought to be largely remunerative. Mr. Adley recommended the reclamation of the Dānkuni, Kātliā and Rājāpur swamps; the deepening of the *khāls* and improvement of their embouchures; the re-opening of the Kānā Nadī: the adoption throughout the district of 'high and low level drains, to serve the treble purpose of drainage, irrigation and navigation;' and the introduction of general sanitary measures. A portion of Mr. Adley's scheme—that for draining the Dānkuni marsh—was approved of by Government, and in 1871 the Drainage Act (V of 1871) was passed, under which Commissioners were appointed to carry out the work of draining the Dānkuni *jhils*. The works were commenced in January 1873, and were completed in the same year.

They consist of :—(1) drainage channels, 16½ miles long, excavated through the lowest ground in the middle of the *jhils* and leading to the Baidyabāti Khāl on the north and the Bally Khāl on the south; these two *khāls* have also been partially straightened, widened and deepened; (2) two self-acting sluices, one in each *khāl*, with three openings and double gates; and (3) an iron-girdered two-spanned bridge over the Serampore-Chanditalā crossing. The total cost amounted to Rs. 3,97,395, which, with maintenance charges capitalized, have been recovered from the persons interested. The works proved a great success from the first, all the available waste land being brought under cultivation within two years, while the annual report of the Sanitary Commissioner for 1874 stated that a large tract of country, which was formerly the centre of much disease and mortality, had become healthy owing to their completion. At present the annual charges for repairs do not usually exceed Rs. 2,000; but in 1903-04 they went up to Rs. 7,170, while in 1906-07 they fell to Rs. 258.

Rājāpur drainage works.

Colonel Haig, who was deputed to make an engineering survey of the district, proposed in 1873 to extend the Dānkuni scheme to other tracts in the south and submitted three drainage schemes, known as the Howrah, Rājāpur and Amtā

schemes. The Howrah and Amtā schemes concern the Howrah district only, while the Rājāpur drainage works drain the southern extremity of Kristanagar thāna in the Serampore subdivision, but lie for the most part in the Howrah district. These works were constructed under the revised Drainage Act VI of 1880, under the provisions of which a small drainage channel west of Rāmpur was also constructed in 1907-08 at a cost of Rs. 3,947.

The Sanitary Drainage Act VIII of 1895 is in force in the district, but has not yet been utilized. It has been proposed recently to canalize part of the Kunti river under this Act, but no final action has yet been taken in the matter.

EMBANKMENTS.

In a riparian district such as Hooghly, embankments are of exceptional importance. The river Hooghly is not embanked on the west side, as its bank is sufficiently high and the towns are fairly well protected, but along the other rivers there are a number of public embankments, generally under the charge of the Government. In 1907-1908 Government maintained 164 miles, 3,365 feet of B class embankments at its own expense and 6 miles of D class embankments at the expense of the persons benefited. The total cost of repairing the former amounted to Rs. 34,328, and the repairs of the latter cost Rs. 5,053.

On the left bank of the Dwārakeswar and its branch the Sankarā, there is a continuous line (No. 6), 5 miles 250 feet long; and on the right bank of the Dwārakeswar and its other branch the Jhumi, there is another continuous line (No. 7), 6 miles 3,200 feet in length. Besides these, there is a circuit embankment (No. 20), 13 miles 5,108 feet long, beginning at the inner point of bifurcation of the Sankarā and Jhumi, going round on the inner circuit and terminating again in that point. The aggregate length of the three Dwārakeswar embankments is thus 30 miles 3,278 feet.

The river Dāmodar has a continuous line of high embankments on the left bank, 106 miles 1,114 feet long (No. 32), of which 41 miles 3,494 feet are in the Hooghly district. It has also on the right bank six detached embankments with a total length of 47 miles 2,000 feet, of which 12 miles 4,250 feet are in the Hooghly district (Nos. 36 and 37). The left embankment of the Dāmodar being continuous for more than one hundred miles, has been provided with many sluices to allow for irrigation and the outflow of inland drainage. Among these sluices may be mentioned that at Kamarul, constructed in 1883-84 at a cost of Rs 5,451; a channel inside the sluice was excavated in 1889-90 at a cost of Rs. 4,659.

The Kānā Nadī, the Kānā Dāmodar, the Saraswatī and the Rūpnārāyan (left bank), have zamīndāri embankments at various

places. To prevent parts of Amtā and Kristanagar thānas being flooded at times of heavy rainfall, the zamīndāri *bāndhs* on the left bank of the Madāriā Khāl are being remodelled for six miles from Dilākhās to Penro (in the Howrah district), at a cost of Rs. 30,000 The zamīndāri *bāndhs* are, as a rule, in a state of disrepair.

History of the embankments. The necessity for embankments in this district has long been recognized, and they date back to a period anterior to British rule. It was, in fact, considered to be a duty of the zamīndārs "to secure their lands from inundation by repairing the embankments." The cost of repairing the *bāndhs* was known as *pulbandi* and was realized by the zamīndārs from the tenants concerned. When the British took over the ceded districts, numerous embankments were in existence in Hooghly, the most important being within the Burdwán Rāj estate, which owned those along the Dāmodar, those on the Dwārakeswar and the Silai, and those on the Ajai river. In 1178 B.S. (1771-72 A.D.), the year after the great famine, the total *pulbandi* charges of the Rāj were assessed at Rs. 50,000. The Rājā having fallen into arrears in the payment of land revenue, the Government took charge of the estate for several years, and entered into a contract with a Mr. Fraser for the repair of the embankments. The contract expired in 1783, and the Government then decided to make a settlement with the Rājā, "as being more agreeable to the zamīndāri constitution," and assessed the *pulbandi* charges at Rs. 60,000. This assessment was confirmed at the decennial and permanent settlements and was deducted from the Rājā's total land revenue. The Rājā occasionally entered into contracts with Europeans for the execution of the necessary repairs, *e.g.*, with Mr. Marriot in 1800. The appointment of the latter was at first questioned by the Board, which subsequently allowed advances to be made to him.

The upkeep of the embankments under this system appears to have been inefficient, and the admonitions of the Board of Revenue were not infrequently conveyed to the Rājā through the Collector. At length, their neglected state necessitated the formation of a special committee to take care of them: in December 1803 and March 1804, we find the Rājā complaining of its requisitions. As a further measure for their improvement, Regulation VI was passed in 1806. When the Rājā's estates of Mandalghāt (Howrah) and Chitwā (Ghātāl, Midnapore) were sold, his assessment was reduced to sicca Rs. 53,742. At length, wearied with annual demands for repairs (the cost of which now and then exceeded the amount assessed), the Rājā engaged in

1826 to pay that sum as revenue on condition that Government took over and maintained the embankments.

As late as 1833, there was no reliable record distinguishing Government from the zamīndāri *bāndhs*; and in May 1835, the Superintendent of Embankments remarked that, owing to the gradual disrepair and decay of the latter, every successive flood did more and more damage. He gave the following list of the various kinds of embankments :—(1) *Ganguriā*, river embankments; (2) *Sarhad* or *pargana*, boundary embankments; (3) *Grām-bheri*, village boundary embankments; (4) *Fāri*, second embankments; (5) *Hāssiāh*, creek embankments; (6) *Khāl*, cross embankments in creeks and *nullahs*; (7) *Jal-nikāsi*, drainage embankments; (8) Masonry sluices; (9) *Bols* or wooden sluices. In 1836, the embankment question was taken up in earnest by the Government. The Superintendent was ordered to examine the records of the Collector's office and ascertain, if possible, the respective responsibility of Government and of the zamīndārs and a committee was ordered to meet at Hījīlī and Tamluk in the cold season of 1837-38 to consider all points connected with the existing system. A marked improvement was observable by 1845, when no fewer than 89 masonry sluices had been constructed in lieu of the cuts formerly made by the ryots. In 1846 another committee was appointed to report on the whole subject of the embankments of the Bengal rivers; and this committee made the drastic recommendation that all existing *bāndhs* should be removed entirely and a system of drainage channels substituted.

In the meantime, the floods of the Dāmodar continued to play havoc with its banks, which between 1847 and 1854 were breached in numerous places nearly every year, *e g.*, 25 breaches took place in 1847, 14 in 1849, 56 in 1850, 45 in 1852 and 28 in 1854. Large sums had to be spent in filling up these breaches and in repairing or strengthening the embankments, and the question of maintaining them was thus forced on the attention of Government. After a prolonged enquiry, it was decided to complete and strengthen the left embankment, and to remove the right embankments for 20 miles, retaining only such embankments as were situated at angles and curves of the river where the current bore directly upon the land. These orders were carried out before the flood season of 1859. After further enquiries which lasted several years, the Lieutenant-Governor in May 1863 expressed his opinion that the removal of the right embankment had been a judicious measure, that whatever partial damage might have been sustained by the natural action of the river, was not to be

compared with the injury and devastation formerly produced by the sudden and violent irruption of the river bursting its embankments, and that the general fertility of the area subject to inundation had been greatly increased. Since then, the Dāmodar, being unrestrained by embankments along its western bank, has made a large breach at Beguā in Burdwān, and has poured through it over the eastern half of thānas Arāmbāgh and Khānākul, causing immense damage to the winter crops. Government has lately decided to close this breach by a weir.

CHAPTER X.

RENTS, WAGES AND PRICES.

RENTS.

CASH rents are paid for practically all the land under cultivation in Hooghly, but rents in kind are paid for leases of gardens and fishery rights, and also occasionally for lands newly brought under cultivation and for *char* lands. The system called *bhāg* or *sanjā*, by which tenants pay a portion of the produce of their rice lands as rent, is almost unknown. Tenants wishing to sub-let their lands frequently demand produce rents, but the under-tenants rarely accept leases on such terms. The general level of cash rents is high owing to the keen competition for land and the value of the land itself, the cultivators getting good prices for their produce and thus being able to hold out for a high rent for their unoccupied lands. Detailed statistics of rent rates are not available, as there has been no general settlement since the Permanent Settlement of 1793. The following figures, which are abstracted from Collectors' reports, though not applicable to the whole district, may, however, be quoted for the purposes of comparison.

YEAR.	*Sāli* CLASS.			*Sunā* CLASS.			Sugar-cane.
	I	II	III	I	II	III	
	Rs. A.	Rs. A.	Rs. A.	Rs. A.	Rs. A.	Rs. A.	Rs.
1793 ...	3 0	2 4	1 8	3 0	2 4	1 8	...
1837 ...	2 0 to 2 4	1 12 to 2 0	1 4 to 1 8	3 0	2 8 to 2 12	2 0 to 2 8	2 to 4
1850 ...	7 8	6 0	4 8	7 8	6 0	4 8	...
1870 ...	12 0	9 0	6 0	12 0 to 18 0	9 0	6 12	12 to 24
		(Inferior.)		(Mulberry and tobacco.)			
1901 ...	10 8 to 18 0	5 4 to 6 12		Rs. 12 to Rs. 30.			12 to 24

From the above table it will be apparent that there was no appreciable rise in rents for nearly half a century after the Permanent Settlement. The country was subject to floods; the means of communication had not been improved, and there was no great demand for more land on the part of cultivators. After 1837 came a period of prosperity. Roads and railways were opened; the land was protected against floods by continuous lines of embankments; a keen demand for land grew up; and, with the increase in the price of food-grains, the rates of rent began to rise. By the middle of the 19th century the rents of rice lands had been quadrupled, and the rents of lands bearing special crops had increased four to six times. A sudden check to agricultural progress was, however, caused by the virulent epidemics of Burdwān fever. Hundreds of villages were decimated or left with weak and emaciated cultivators. Local labour became scarce; and in the affected villages hundreds of acres of cultivable lands lay untilled. A better knowledge of the rent laws among the ryots also helped to prevent undue enhancements of rents, and the combined result was to hinder a rise in rentals. The people have now recovered from the effects of the Burdwān fever, and within the last 25 years the rise in the price of food-grains and of jute, and greater facilities for disposing of agricultural produce, have led to an increase of rent rates. The increase has been most noticeable in the case of jute lands owing to the growing demand for this fibre, and, to a smaller extent, in the case of other lands bearing special crops, such as potatoes, vegetables and tobacco. There has been no great increase in the rental of rice lands, and the rental of some inferior lands has even decreased.

WAGES.
Towns.

In the tract on the right bank of the Hooghly, from Bally to Tribenī, urban conditions prevail; and behind it lies a semi-urban area 3 to 8 miles in width. In these portions of the district the rates of wages differ from those common in the more rural thānas, the wages of men-servants being Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 a month, of maid-servants Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 and of cooks Rs. 6 to Rs. 7, besides food and clothing. Barbers usually charge one to two pice for shaving and two to four pice for hair-cutting; while a washerman's charge is Rs. 3 to Rs. 3-8 per hundred articles. The monthly wages of a syce or cooly average Rs. 7, of a common mason or carpenter Rs. 15, and of a common blacksmith Rs. 15 to Rs. 20.

Mofussil.

In the mofussil wages are naturally a little lower. Among agricultural labourers, *krishāns*, or permanent servants, get Re. 1-8 to Rs. 2-8 monthly, besides food and clothing; while

majurs or labourers employed temporarily during the weeding and reaping seasons get 4 to 5 annas a day, besides a light meal at midday. The wages of carpenters or blacksmiths are 20 to 25 per cent. less than in the towns. Thatchers get 5 to 6 annas per diem in addition to their midday meal; barbers charge a pice per head; washermen are few in number, the women generally washing the clothes of the family. Aboriginal field-labourers get less than local labourers, being paid a half to three-fourths of the usual rate. The payment of wages in kind, *e.g.*, grain or vegetables, is disappearing and now survives only in out-of-the-way villages and in the Arāmbāgh subdivision. In rural tracts, however, watchmen are often paid in bundles of paddy for watching the crops.

The figures in the following table, which shows the daily wages entered in the accounts of an estate at Tārakeswar, are of interest as showing the rise which took place between 1845 and 1872.

YEAR.	Thatchers.	Carpenters and black-smiths.	*Krishāns* or field-labourers (exclusive of food and clothing).	Reapers and other day-labourers
	As. P.	As. P.	As. P.	As. P.
1845	2 0	3 0	0 6	1 3
1854	2 6	3 6	0 7½	1 6
1859	3 0	4 0	0 10½	1 10½
1864	3 3	4 6	1 0	2 0
1869	5 3	5 3	1 4	2 0
1872	6 6	6 6	1 4	2 6

Supply of labour.

The slack season for labour extends from April to the middle of June, when, the *rabi* crops being off the fields, very little labour is required except for ploughing or looking after sugarcane and *boro* paddy. In the towns too there is less demand for labour in mills, factories and other industrial concerns. During the rains sowing and weeding require a large labour force, but the real working season begins, towards their close, with the cutting and threshing of jute and the reaping of *āus* paddy. Work of all kinds is in full swing in the winter months (October-March). In the towns there is a constant demand for labour at this time, not only in the mills and factories, but also for brick-making, while in the rural tracts the reaping of the winter rice and *rabi* crops, as well as work in gardens and orchards, provides employment for the surplus labour available.

Generally speaking, the indigenous day-labourers work in the fields, while the operatives in mills are mostly Oriyās or men from up-country. There is very little emigration, but immigrants are numerous, forming, indeed, a larger proportion of the population than in any regulation district of Bengal outside Howrah and the 24-Parganas. Maid-servants come from Bānkurā, cooks from Bānkurā, Midnapore and Orissa, servants from Bānkurā, Orissa and up-country, coolies from up-country and Orissa, agricultural and earth-work labourers from up-country, Chotā Nāgpur and the Santāl Parganas. There is a general complaint of the insufficiency of the supply of labour. During the winter months, the labour question often becomes acute, and instances have been known of crops rotting on the fields and looms stopping for want of workers. The difficulties caused by the deficiency of labour are further aggravated by epidemics of malarial fever that break out from November to February, reducing the number of workers and diminishing the working capacity of those who survive. This scarcity of labour is no new feature in the economic history of the district. Even in the early part of the 19th century labour could not be had for work on roads and embankments, except at exorbitant rates. The superintendents of those works were loud in their complaints on this score, and were somewhat indignant with the district authorities for not forcing people to work for them at their own rates.

PRICES.

Food-grains.

The main crop is *āman* or winter paddy, which is reaped and threshed from December to the middle of February; consequently, rice is cheapest in February. Then its price rises, slowly or rapidly according to the outturn of the harvest, the state of the market, etc., until the maximum is reached in the rainy months of July and August. With the harvesting of *āus* paddy, the price of rice falls, to rise again before the reaping of the *āman* crop, the rise being brisk if the *āman* harvest is expected to be bad, and slow if a good crop is expected. From November prices decline until the minimum is reached in February. Pulses, the chief *rabi* crops, are harvested between January and March, and are consequently cheapest in February and March. Of these, *khesāri* (Lathyrus sativus) is the cheapest, but is little used except by the poorest classes. The pulse commonly consumed in this district, and, in fact, throughout the whole of the Burdwān Division, is *kalāi* (Phaseolus Roxburghii), which being harvested in January, is cheapest in February. Wheat is grown on a small scale and is mostly imported. Its price, therefore, depends on the rates prevailing elsewhere; as a rule, it sells at a cheap rate in March and April.

Miscellaneous.

The vegetables commonly consumed are potatoes, brinjals, plantains (unripe), and *patals*. Potatoes are gathered in February-March, and prices rule lowest in March. Brinjals are cheap throughout the winter months, and *kānch-kalās* (unripe plantains) in the rainy season; *patals* (Trichosanthus dioica) appear in the market in March, becoming cheaper and cheaper till June. Among fruits, mangoes are most popular owing to their quantity and wide distribution, and are eaten by all classes, both rich and poor. The season extends from the middle of April to the middle of June, the cheapest month being May. Of other articles, molasses and mustard oil are cheapest from February to April, though the price of the former is materially affected by imports from Java. The price of salt is generally uniform throughout the year; and so is that of *ghī* or clarified butter, but its price is often enhanced during marriage seasons, specially in the summer.

Changes in prices.

The table below will give a sufficient indication of the rise in the prices of food-grains and salt (the prices being shown in seers per rupee) during the period for which figures are available.

Average of years.		Rice (Common).	Wheat.	Gram.	Salt.
		Srs.	Srs.	Srs.	Srs.
1793-1813 (21 years)	...	40·00	50·50	50·50	...
1861-1865 (5 years)	...	21·00	21·4[illegible]	22·71	10·60
1866-1870 (ditto) ...	...	20·84	21·86	17·14	9·32
1871-1875 (ditto) ...	...	16·94	14·64	18·74	8·73
1876-1880 (ditto) ...	...	14·40	13·89	15·43	9·00
1881-1885 (ditto) ...	...	16·59	15·57	18·37	12·43
1886-1890 (ditto) ...	...	14·86	13·95	17·16	10·76
1891-1895 (ditto) ...	...	11·86	12·95	15·08	10·59
1896-1900 (ditto) ...	...	10·95	10·97	12·59	9·97
1901-1905 (ditto) ...	...	9·98	10·34	12·64	12·16
1906-1907 (2 years)	..	7·40	8·50	9·46	16·17

These figures show that during the last half century, prices have been enhanced threefold. If further proof be needed of the change which has taken place, it will be sufficient to mention that after the famine of 1866, in which the average price of rice for the year rose to 12·86 seers per rupee, the Collector reported that if the price of ordinary rice were to rise as high as 13 seers per rupee soon after the winter harvest, it should be considered as a warning of approaching famine; and in his opinion, Government relief operations would become necessary when the price of inferior rice rose beyond 12 seers a rupee. During 1906 and 1907, however, the average price of common rice was less than 7½ seers per rupee, without any relief measures being deemed necessary.

There has been a similar rise in the price of other articles such as *ghī*, oil, fish, meat (goat), vegetables, and fruits, also cloths, kerosene oil, wood, bamboos, straw, brick and lime. There has been, however, a fall in the prices of salt, sugar and tea. The cheapening of salt is mainly due to changes in the duty levied by Government. In 1882 the rate of duty was reduced from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 2, was raised again to Rs. 2-8 in 1888, but was again brought down to Rs. 2 in 1903. Since then the tax was reduced to Re. 1-8 in 1905 and to Re. 1 in 1907, which lowered the retail prices still further. The fall in the price of sugar is largely due to importation of foreign sugar and of Java molasses, and the cheapening of tea is attributed to over-production.

MATERIAL CONDITION.

The rural portion of the district has long been famous for its fertility. Towards the close of the 18th century the Burdwān zamīndāri within which it was then included, was described by Mr. (Sarishtadār) J. Grant as "the rich zamīndāri," "the enlarged, compact and fertile zamīndāri," "a garden in a desert, deemed wonderfully productive in the beginning of the present century," etc. These remarks were echoed by Mr. W. Hamilton, according to whom it had "thriven so prosperously, that in proportion to its dimensions, it may be reckoned the most productive territory in India."* After the lapse of a century, in spite of the ravages of fever and the damage caused by floods, the district continues to be one of the most prosperous in Bengal. The cultivators, who are mainly Kaibarttas, Sadgops and Sheikhs, rank among the best cultivators in Bengal, being hard-working, thrifty and fairly intelligent. Utilizing every bit of available land, sowing a wide diversity of crops, selling their produce with a shrewd knowledge of the current rates, they make the best of their resources. They further add to their income by working in the mills during the slack months, by catching fish, by raising fruit trees, vegetables and herbs on homestead lands, and so forth. Their women, too, assist by husking paddy and cleaning rice, by helping in fishing, etc.

The reports of the local officers confirm this impression of material well-being. As far back as 1848 the Magistrate remarked that during a tour in the district he had not met with a single patch of uncultivated land, and added that the number of brick buildings in every village, the comfortable appearance of the dwellings, and the many articles of foreign manufacture which the inhabitants possessed, were sufficient evidence of their

* *Description of Hindostan*, 1820.

being a prosperous and industrious race. Forty years later, (in 1888), after a special enquiry regarding the condition of the lower classes, the then Collector, Mr. Toynbee, remarked:—"The general result of the enquiries made is to show conclusively that in this district all classes of the peasantry eat twice a day and enjoy a full meal on each occasion. Here and there a poor widow or beggar may be found who does not always get two meals a day, but as a rule even they, the poorest of the poor, do so. No single instance of emaciation or disease due to want of food came to light during any of the enquiries. As regards clothing, the wants of the poorer classes are very limited and are sufficiently provided for. In the cold weather, no doubt, a little extra and warmer clothing would be acceptable, specially to their children, but as soon as the sun is up, they bask in its rays and are content. Few, if any, of the agricultural classes have any idea of thrift or of saving money for a rainy day, and they are most of them in debt to their *mahājan;* but this impecuniosity and indebtedness are due not to their poverty, but to their extravagance and imprudence. They spend far more on social and religious ceremonies than they can afford, and think little of a life-long debt so long as they can secure the gratification of the moment. Labour is abundant and wages are high, and if any man, woman or child does not get all material wants fully satisfied, it is their own fault.

"Perhaps the poorest class in the district is the weaver class, whose trade has suffered so severely from the competition of Manchester goods. Mr. Duke, the Subdivisional Officer of Serampore, says of them that they "eat twice a day pretty regularly, but in some cases with considerable difficulty." The chief effect on them seems to be that they have to eat a coarser kind of rice than they used to eat and that they are more hopelessly indebted to their *mahājans* than before, in fact, they are "little more than half as well off as they used to be." Many of them find work in the European jute mills in the Serampore subdivision, and there earn high wages, but the majority are too fond of their homes to leave them and seek employment elsewhere; they struggle on and exist, and are therewith content. The enquiries made in the jail by the Civil Surgeon support the general result of the local mofussil enquiries, the conclusion arrived at being that the physical condition of the artisan group was the worst, while the general health of cultivators and labourers appeared about equal.

"The condition of the poorer classes in this district, compared with that of the same classes in England, may unhesitatingly

be described as superior in every respect. There is no such thing as want or starvation among them and not one individual who does not know when he rises in the morning how or where he will procure food for the day. Their wants are few and easily satisfied; the climate in which they live and all their surroundings are enervating and to our view demoralizing; ambition they have none, beyond the immediate wants or wishes of the day; but, judged from their own point of view and by their own standard, they are prosperous and contented, and I doubt not that there are thousands upon thousands of the English poor who would gladly change places with them. I have not considered it necessary to give any figures in support of a conclusion which is so potent to every observer, and which has year by year impressed itself more and more on my mind since I came to the district nearly five years ago."

During a special enquiry about the prevalence of liquor-drinking in the districts of Hooghly and Howrah in 1888, Mr. Westmacott came to nearly the same conclusion. The twenty years which have since elapsed have produced little change, the Board of Revenue remarking in their Administration Report for 1907-08, that "in the districts of Hooghly, Howrah and other portions of Burdwān, the high wages earned in mills and factories, as well as the fertility of the soil and greater facilities for communication, enable the people to maintain a high standard of comfort." In one respect there has been an improvement. The recent movement in favour of country-made goods has given a stimulus to the weaving industry, so that the condition of the hitherto depressed class of weavers has improved.

Indebtedness.

It appears too that the indebtedness of the peasantry is not so great as elsewhere. Statistics of the mortgages or loans of cultivators are not available; but in addition to cultivation, they find so many avenues of employment, and are mostly so thrifty, that the percentage of indebted ryots is believed to be lower than in other districts of Bengal outside Howrah. Among the Kaibarttas and Sadgops loans and mortgages among fellow caste-men are common, but by this arrangement the payment of exorbitant interest is avoided, and reasonable time is allowed for the repayment of interest and capital. In other cases loans are taken from petty shopkeepers, but most tenants, thanks to the good prices they obtain for their produce and the transferability of their rights in land, get good credit from them. Landlords, too, generally avoid litigation with their tenants on account of the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act, VIII of 1885, which are well known to the principal

cultivators. Indeed, the landlords, who come from the middle classes and are more or less merely rent-receivers, borrow more and are comparatively more indebted than the *jeth-raiyats*.

There is, however, a reverse side to this bright picture. As Colonel Crawford has remarked:—"If the district, as a whole, is rich and prosperous, it is a prosperity which is purchased with human lives. The inhabitants are essentially, like the conies, a feeble folk. The fat and fertile soil, which grows great crops of rice in abundance, is not the kind of country which breeds a race of strong men. . . Fever is almost universal. The fertile rice lands grow not rice alone, but breed malaria with equal success. . . The death-rate is considerably higher than the birth-rate, and if it were not for the constant stream of immigration of a more sturdy population from more healthy tracts elsewhere, the inhabitants would, in course of time, gradually die out."

CHAPTER XI.

OCCUPATIONS, INDUSTRIES AND TRADE.

OCCUPATION. IN no district of Bengal except Howrah is the proportion of persons engaged in industrial occupations so large or of agriculturists so small. The statistics obtained at the census of 1901 show that 53·8 per cent. of the population are supported by agriculture, 20·3 per cent. by various industries, 3·8 per cent. by professions, and 2·5 per cent. by trade. Of the agriculturists, rent-payers aggregated 503,061, or more than 97 per cent., and the number of rent-receivers represented less than 3 per cent. Besides these, there were 48,794 agricultural labourers, of whom 24,504, or more than half, were actual workers, while of the rent-payers and rent-receivers, only 164,099, or less than one-third, were actual workers. The following are the numbers of actual workers among those engaged in the other principal occupations :—General labourers (46,934), fishermen and fish-dealers (13,072), rice pounders (12,194), cotton workers (11,961), jute mill operatives (10,932), servants (7,406), and priests (6,312). The proportion of actual female workers is generally somewhat small, but it is over 50 per cent. in the case of servants, rice pounders and vegetable sellers, nearly 50 per cent. in the case of fishermen,, fish dealers and grain dealers, and more than 25 per cent. in the case of general labourers. The general prosperity of the community is indicated by the comparatively small number of mendicants (4,998) and their dependants (2,072).

Fishing. Fishing is an occupation followed by a considerable number of members of the lower castes, especially Bāgdis, Kaibarttas (Jaliyā) and Tiyars, for fish is always in demand. It is eaten by all classes, except Vaishnavas, widows of the higher classes, and a few others ; and it is one of the few luxuries, if it can be called a luxury, that the cultivator allows himself and his family. Fish are plentiful in the winter months, when the local supply is supplemented by imports from the Hooghly estuary and the Padmā, from Bihār and Bhāgalpur. Hence, except on marriage

days, (called *lagansāh*), the price remains fairly uniform at this season of the year. The price is higher during the rains, when *hilsā* are abundant, but most other fish are scarce on account of floods.

Various kinds of fishing implements are used, of which the chief are :—in rivers and large flowing streams, *māl jāl*, *huri jāl*, and drag nets ; in sluggish streams, bamboo weirs and cast nets (*kheyā jāl*) ; in tanks and ponds, cast nets and bamboo traps (*polu*). Special implements are used for catching *hilsā*, *ārn*, and mud-fish, such as *koi*, *māgur* and *sol*. Fishing with rod and line is popular, the best hooks being generally imported. Good hooks used to be made at Dhaniākhāli, but the workmen appear to have died off.

Fresh fish is always preferred, but the lower classes eat fish, mostly of the smaller kinds, dried in the sun (*sutki*). Fish rearing is practised on a small scale. The impregnated eggs floating near the shallow edges of a river are collected and sold at the rate of Rs. 5 to Rs. 8 per *hāndi* or large pot. They are hatched in shallow ponds, and the small fry, when sufficiently large, are caught, sorted and put in different tanks, or sold to hawkers, who carry them about for sale. Eggs and spawn are caught for this purpose in the Hooghly and Dāmodar, a task which gives the fishermen employment during the slack season.

INDUSTRIES.

During the period of Mughal rule, Sātgaon, and, after its decline, Hooghly, were the chief ports of West Bengal and contained numerous depôts for the merchandise exported by Europeans and others. The goods were mostly brought in from the mofussil, but in course of time several industries grew up in the towns and their neighbourhood. Among the products of the mofussil may be mentioned oil, sugar and *ghī* (often called butter), which were produced in large quantities. Coarse hemp and gunnies are also specially mentioned as being exported from Hooghly in considerable quantities, and they therefore must have been produced in many neighbouring villages. Both in the mofussil and in the towns cotton-weaving and tusser-weaving flourished, Mr. W. Clavell in his *Accompt of the Trade of Hugly* specially noticing that "about Hugly there live many weavers who weave cotton cloth, and cotton and *Tesser* or *Herba* of several sorts".* Raw silk and wrought silk were also exported from Hooghly; but it is not clear whether they were the products of the district. It seems, however, certain that

* *Diary* of W. Hedges, Yule, Vol. II, p. 239. Walter Clavell was Chief at Hooghly from 1672 to 1676 A. D.

in the 16th and 17th centuries it had several indigenous industries of importance, which were fostered and developed by the trade of the Europeans. According to Thomas Bowrey, the Portuguese resident in Hooghly town, though mostly very poor, were also employed in various handicrafts, such as knitting stockings of silk and cotton, baking bread, preparing sweetmeats from fruit, viz., mangoes, oranges, lemons, ginger, myrobalans, etc., and making pickles from mangoes, lemons, etc.* They also made a kind of cheese – an industry which has survived, for even now small quantities of cheese, called Bandel cheese, are made and sent to Calcutta.

During the first half of the 18th century European trade and the industries dependent on it flourished, for though the English East India Company had removed their head-quarters to Calcutta, their trade with this district did not fall off materially, while the trade of the French increased considerably. A check to this industrial development was caused by the inroads of the Marāthās and the wars waged from 1741 to 1757, but with the establishment of British supremacy after the battle of Plassey and the cession of Burdwān and Hooghly in 1760, a new era began.

During the early years of British rule (1760-1840), the principal industries and manufactures of the district were carried on either under direct European supervision, or with advances made by European capitalists. The East India Company themselves traded in cotton, silk and jute fabrics, besides sugar and indigo, and had factories or commercial residents in the mofussil for their manufacture and purchase. They endeavoured to retain a monopoly of this trade, and "interlopers", *i.e.*, rival non-official Europeans, could not settle in the mofussil without the special permission of the Governor-General. These restrictions were gradually relaxed In 1793 non-officials were allowed to trade in all articles except piece-goods and military and naval stores; in 1833 Parliament deprived the Company of all their commercial privileges; and by 1836 the commercial residencies of the Government were abolished, thus opening up the district to private enterprise.

In the district, as now constituted, commercial residents of the Company were stationed at Golāghor near Magrā and at Haripāl in the Serampore subdivision, the factory having been moved there from Rājbalhāt about 1790. Each of the residencies had out-factories subordinate to it, the boundary between the

* *The Countries round the Bay of Bengal*, 1669-79, pp. 192-3.

two being the road passing from Nayāsarai through Golāghor to Burdwān. The trade of Dīwānganj on the Dwārakeswar appears to have been carried on by river with Ghatāl in the residency of Rādhānagar, which in 1795 was described as the port of the latter place, and of Khirpāi and Chandrakonā (both in the Ghātāl subdivision of Midnapore).* Silk and cotton cloths appear to have been the chief articles of manufacture, but at Golāghor a trade in hemp and jute was carried on. Silk and cotton fabrics, to the annual value of ten lakhs, are said to have been manufactured under the patronage of the Company, but the trade gradually declined, and the post of resident was abolished about 1830, while the buildings and sites were sold off between 1830 and 1836. The main cause of the collapse in the cotton industry was the competition of Manchester goods, which, it was reported, could be sold at less than half the price of the cloths made at the Company's factory.

During this period non-official Europeans were mainly engaged in the manufacture of indigo, sugar and rum. Indigo appears to have been introduced into the district as early as 1780,—according to one account, by Mr. Prinsep—and the industry must have been well established by 1793, when some extensive indigo works were offered for sale at Rishrā.† In 1795, Regulation XXIII was passed to settle the relations between the ryots, the indigo-planters and the Government. Towards the end of that century the cultivation of indigo gradually increased and a number of factories were started in the mofussil. The disputes and disturbances caused by the planters encroaching on each other's rights led Government in 1800 to pass orders that no European should establish a new indigo factory in the neighbourhood of an existing one: this rule was not withdrawn till 1830. The natives, moreover, were hostile to the industry, and assaults and riots were not infrequent. During 1822-42, indigo factories were in existence at Chanditalā, Bānsberiā, Hosnābād, Taldā, Durgāpur, Kalkāpur, Meliā, Paigāchhi and Khanyān, the last being owned (in 1830) by a Bengali named Durpa Nārāyan Mukharji.

The manufacture of rum according to European methods was another industry of some importance. The earliest rum distillery of which there is record was built in 1810 at Bandel, in spite of the protests of the Prior, who expected that its establishment

---

* *Selections from the Calcutta Gazette*, Vol. I, p. 41; Toynbee's *Administration of Hooghly*, pp. 91, 92; W. Hamilton's *Hindostan* (1820), Vol. I, p. 37.

† *Calcutta Gazette*, 21st February 1793, Selections, Vol. I, p. 550.

would lead to drunkenness and disorder. The business prospered for some years, the rum being not only supplied to the troops in India but also exported to Europe and Australia; and the sales in 1829 amounted to 61,028 gallons. Other distilleries sprung up at Ballabhpur, Paddamdāngā, Dhānguri, Rishrā, Konnagar, Bānkipur and Chandernagore, but owing to the fall in the price of rum exported to Europe the industry became extinct about 1840.

The manufacture of chintz, which is said to have been introduced by Mr. Prinsep, was another industry which attracted European enterprise. In 1822 two factories existed, one at Rishrā and the other at Chāmpdāni, but eventually the industry succumbed to the competition of the cheaper Manchester goods. There was also a tobacco factory at Chinsura in 1836, which had been started by a Dutch firm. Among smaller industries may be mentioned the manufacture of paper at Serampore, Pānduā, Sātgaon and Bāli Dīwānganj, and the brick kilns along the bank of the river Hooghly. The paper of Pānduā was of such repute that the Magistrates of Sylhet and other districts frequently asked the Hooghly Magistrate for supplies of it.

During the latter part of the 19th century the two most noticeable features in the industrial history of the district were the gradual decline of all the above-mentioned industries, except the manufacture of bricks, tiles and *surki*, and the development of large industrial concerns, financed and managed by Europeans on European lines. Among the earliest of the latter were the Wellington Jute Mill at Rishrā and the Serampore Paper Mill. The latter, the first paper mill in India, produced the well-known bleached paper called Serampurī; but it was not very successful, and its business was transferred to the paper mill at Bally in the Howrah district, which was started by a company in 1874. In 1866 the India Jute Mill was opened at Serampore; in 1873 the Chāmpdāni Jute Mill started work; by 1888 the Victoria and Hastings Mills had been added to the number of jute mills, and all five employed over 11,000 hands daily when in full work. Other factories established before the close of the 19th century were a cotton mill at Serampore, bone mills at Uttarpārā and Magrā, and the Victoria Chemical Works at Konnagar.

During the present century there has been a revival of indigenous industries, owing to the stimulus given by the *swadeshi* movement to the use of country-made goods Cotton-weaving by means of hand looms has advanced distinctly, and the local weavers are earning fair incomes. Other handicrafts, such

as tusser-weaving, carpentry and the manufacture of bell-metal and brassware, have also benefited, though to a smaller extent. Another new feature is a growing inclination on the part of the Indian community to invest capital in manufacturing concerns managed chiefly, if not entirely, by Indians. The effect of this movement is seen in a cotton mill at Serampore, and in various brick kilns, *surki* mills and oil mills.

Mills.

All the large factories now at work in the district lie within the Serampore subdivision, on the west bank of the Hooghly river. They consist of six jute mills, one cotton mill, one bone mill and the chemical works at Konnagar.

Jute mills.

All the jute mills are big concerns engaged in jute spinning and in jute weaving. Their size and importance will be apparent from the following table. There is also a jute mill at Gondalpārā in French Chandernagore—

Name.	Place.	Year of opening.	Number (in 1908) of—		Average daily number of operatives, 1908.	Outturn in 1907-08.
			Looms.	Spindles.		
Chāmpdāni ...	Chāmpdāni and Baidyabāri.	1873	482	8,764	3,200	328,583 mds.
Dalhousie ...	Bhadreswar ...	1905	432	9,030	2,800	12,440 tons.
Hastings ...	Rishrā	1875	750	15,580	5,822	609,249 mds.
India	Serampore ...	1866	700	9,936	3,267	455,665 ,,
Victoria ..	Telinipārā ...	1885	1,037	22,760	7,387	676,065 ,,
Wellington ...	Rishrā	1855	277	5,544	2,911	10,425 tons.

Cotton mills.

Only one cotton mill is at present at work, viz., the Bengal Lakshmi Cotton Mill at Māhesh, which took over a working concern, the Lakshmī Tulsi Cotton Mill. In 1908 this mill employed on the average 1,026 hands daily and had over 200 looms with 26,000 spindles, the outturn in 1907-08 being 31,617 maunds. The company was formed in 1906, and has a paid-up capital of 11⅔ lakhs. The mill has had four sets of proprietors within ten years, and is the only mill in Bengal which weaves *dhotis*. Another cotton mill, the Kalliān, has been constructed at Māhesh and has recently started work. Both the mills are financed and managed chiefly by Indians.

Other mills.

Two other factories are the Ganges Valley Bone Mill at Uttarpārā for crushing bones, and the Victoria Chemical Works at Konnagar for manufacturing acids, various salts, sulphates, manures, disinfectants and other chemicals. In 1908 they employed daily 303 and 108 hands, respectively, and in 1907-08 the outturn of the former was 13,315 tons and of the latter 980 tons. The Konnagar factory was formerly at Chitpur and has been established on its present site for 14 years.

Brick and tile-making.

Bricks are made along the west bank of the Hooghly river from Bānsberiā to Bally, and also along the Bally Khāl, wherever suitable soil is found; tiles are also made in some of the brick-fields at Kotrang and other places. Numerous brick kilns use a patent kiln invented by Mr. Bull, and employ a large number of hands in the busy season, *i.e.*, November to May. In 1907 there were 11 brick-fields, each employing 50 workmen or more, which were therefore classed as factories. There are also a large number of mills for pounding bricks into *surki;* in 1907 there were 31 such mills with 50 or more workmen each.

Small industries.

Cotton weaving, after the cessation of the East India Company's commercial operations, languished in consequence of the competition of imported piece-goods. By the end of the 19th century, the latter had almost driven the products of the local looms out of the market; the trade in local yarns was extinct, and except in outlying tracts the manufacture of all but the finest cloths ceased. The number of persons engaged in cotton weaving decreased by about 33 per cent. in 20 years, and those who clung to their old handicraft had for the most part to supplement their earnings from other sources, such as agriculture, service, etc. In the towns, what little weaving there was owed its survival largely to the use of an improved hand-loom, known as the Serampore hand-loom, which was introduced from Chandernagore. Recently, however, in consequence of the *swadeshī* movement and the preference for country-made cloth which it inspired, the fortunes of the weavers have improved and they are now able to make a fair living. On this point the Magistrate reported in 1907 :—"It appears that while formerly the weavers had to take advances from the middlemen and were always more or less indebted to the latter, they are now very much better off, and if anything, the middlemen are sometimes indebted to them. I was told the other day by the President of the Dwārhātā Union that a young widow of the weaver caste, who would formerly have in all possibility suffered great privation, was now earning Rs. 16 or 17 a month and maintaining herself and her younger brother and sister in some comfort. In Dhaniākhāli I was told that a weaver earns about Rs. 20 a month, and the Subdivisional Officer of Serampore reported that a weaver there earns Rs. 25 a month. On the other hand, a large dealer in Dhaniākhāli was complaining that he was doing less business now than before, because now dealers from Chandernagore and elsewhere are coming to the villages, whereas formerly he and few others had a sort of monopoly." Under these circumstances, though the yarns are all mill-made, cotton-weaving continues to be the most important

of the small industries of Hooghly, and in 1906-07 the total value of the outturn in the Ārāmbāgh subdivision alone (where the fly-shuttle loom is not used) is reported to have been Rs. 14,10,600.

Cotton cloths are woven in most large villages, but the chief centres are:—in the Sadar subdivision, Dhaniākhāli Tāntibazar and Khanyān; in the Serampore subdivision, Serampore, Haripāl, Dwārhātā, Kaikala, Jaynagar, Kharsarai, Antpore and Rājbalhāt; and in the Ārāmbāgh subdivision Kālme, Khānākul, Krishtanagar and Māyāpur, besides French Chandernagore. The weavers prepare *dhotis*, *sāris*, *chādars* and *gāmchhās*, but fine cloths are made at Serampore, Haripāl, Dhaniākhāli and Kālme, as well as in French Chandernagore. The cloths made in the first and last towns are specially known as Farāsdāngā.

The Serampore hand-loom.

The vitality of the industry in this district, and especially in Serampore, is attributed to the use of an improved hand-loom, which is simply the old English fly-shuttle loom invented by John Kay and introduced in Serampore from Chandernagore more than 50 years ago. The chief difference between this loom and the ordinary country loom is that it contains a string and lever mechanism for pushing the shuttle backwards and forwards across alternate sheddings of the warp threads along the shuttle run; whereas in the country loom the shuttle is passed by the hands of the weaver between the threads of the warp. This is a distinct improvement on the ordinary hand-loom, in so far as it leads to a great deal of economy in labour. The improved loom works twice as fast as the ordinary country looms, for whereas, with the latter, a man can turn out 1½ yards per day, with the improved loom he can finish 2½ to 3 yards per day. The Serampore weavers have also adopted, in the formation of the warp, a simple labour-saving appliance by which 100 threads can be laid simultaneously instead of one or two. Instead of using only one bobbin and passing the thread backwards and forwards until the number of threads required for the width of cloth have been arranged, a bobbin frame is used containing a number of reels of thread, so that a full width or half a width of warp can be reeled off at once.

The fly-shuttle loom has now been adopted by many weavers in the Hooghly and Serampore subdivisions, and efforts to extend its use in other parts of Bengal have been made during the last 9 years, which are described as follows by Mr. J. G. Cumming:— "Mr. Havell, the Principal of the School of Art, Calcutta, took up the matter in 1901. From that time, by lectures, letters and advertisements, Mr. Havell did a great public service in his

efforts to extend the use of the Serampore fly-shuttle loom. Government circulated instructions and sketches; District Boards were importuned to send weavers for training at Serampore; a factory for the manufacture of Serampore looms was started at Chinsura, first under Ghosh, Chaudhri & Co., then under Ghosh, Pālit & Co., then under Mr. P. N. De. The progress from year to year was summarized in the District Board reports, and Mr. Havell at one time was persuaded that 10,000 new looms were working, and in February 1908 was of the same opinion. An examination of the correspondence in many of the District Board offices discloses that there was too much amateur work; and recent enquiries show that the new form of loom, notwithstanding the impetus of the *swadeshī* movement, has not been sufficiently attractive to the working weaver. . . What has happened in Bengal is that in parts of Jessore district and most of the Howrah district, in the Sadar and Serampore subdivisions, but not in the Arāmbāgh subdivision of the Hooghly district, and in the Rānīganj side of the Burdwān district, the Serampore pattern of hand-loom has extended. But I believe that it was due more to inter-communication among the people themselves than to official efforts to popularize the Serampore fly-shuttle loom."

Since these remarks were recorded Government has established (in 1909) a central school of weaving at Serampore in order to teach improved methods of weaving.

Silk weaving. The trade in silk fabrics was at first monopolized by the East India Company, but on their withdrawing from commercial operations, it passed into the hands of private European firms, and in particular of Messrs. Robert Watson & Co. It gradually declined owing to the fluctuating nature of the demand, the restriction in the mulberry-growing area caused by the Dāmodar floods, the degeneracy of the silk-worms and their dying off from disease. By the end of the century silk-weaving was confined to Serampore and to a few places round Bāli Dīwānganj in the Arāmbāgh subdivision; while, even in the latter subdivision, a good many took up tusser reeling and weaving instead of working in pure silk. During the last few years the industry has revived to some extent as a result of the *swadeshī* movement. The weaving of pure silk from the mulberry cocoon is, however, practically confined to Serampore, where silk cloths and handkerchiefs are woven on a small scale. Silk thread is produced locally, mulberry trees being grown on the banks of the Dāmodar, Rupnārāyan and Dwārakeswar. The silk is spun in some small filatures, but most of the cocoons are exported to the filatures at Ghātāl and elsewhere.

The weaving of tusser silk fabrics is an industry of some importance in the Arāmbāgh subdivision. The tusser cocoons are brought from Chota Nāgpur to Badanganj and sold, according to size, in three classes, viz., *dāba* (large), *bāgui* (medium) and *jadui* (small). The traders sell them retail to the weavers and others, whose women spin the threads. Thread is also brought from Sultānpur in Ghātāl, and from several villages in Arāmbāgh, *e.g.*, Mānikhāt, Raipur and Salepur.

The weaving of the thread into cloth is carried on in the Goghāt thāna and especially in the villages included in the Badanganj outpost, which adjoins the Bishnupur subdivision of the Bānkurā district and the Ghātāl subdivision of Midnapore, two important centres of the tusser silk industry. The chief places at which it is carried on are Bāli Dīwānganj, Syāmbazar, Badanganj, Kayāpāt, Kalāgāchia and Rādhāballabhpur. The fabrics produced are *sāris*, *dhotis*, *jors* (suits consisting of a *dhoti* and *chādar*), and dress-pieces made to order. They are sold either to local traders, who make advances to the weavers, or in the local markets, or are sent to the large *hāts* held at Rāmjibanpur in the Ghātāl subdivision and Rāmkrishnapur in Howrah town. Cloths of a superior quality are called *chausuti*, *i.e.*, of four threads, two in the warp and two in the woof, and those of an inferior quality *derhsuti*, *i.e*, having one and half threads. A coarse fabric, called *mukātā* or *kethe*, is prepared at Badanganj from the threads of pierced cocoons. These cloths, which are strong and cheap, are largely used by Oriyās and Mārwāris, and are exported to Orissa and Calcutta. Tusser weaving.

Fabrics of mixed silk, tusser and cotton, known as *rangina*, are made at Bāli Dīwānganj, Udayrājpur and other villages in the Arāmbāgh subdivision, from which they are exported to the Punjab and United Provinces. This industry dates back to the days of Mughal rule. According to colour and size, the fabrics are divided into different classes, *e.g.*, *swagaji* (red and white stripes on an orange ground), *m.skha* (with black and orange stripes), *selai-khata* (black stripes on orange ground), *phulāru* (red flowers on yellow or white ground), *jardā* or *sujasdi* (red and white stripes on a yellow ground), and *sushi* (in red and blue checks). The *phulāru* variety is used in the Punjab for head-dresses or waist-bands, and the other articles for making shirts, jackets or wraps for women, especially for wear during wedding ceremonies. The trade is in the hands of up-country merchants, who have local agents for the purchase of the cloth. Another fabric consisting of tusser and cotton, which is called *garbhasuti* (cotton-wombed), is sometimes made to order. Mixed fabrics.

Rope-works. Rope is made on a fairly large scale from jute and hemp. The rope works are generally situated in the large groves which fringe the East Indian Railway line between Chandernagore and Bally, at places such as Khalsini, Nabagrām, Chātrā, Sankarpur, Belculi and Uttarpārā, Gunny cloth is manufactured at Bālughāt.

Brass and bell-metal ware. The chief centres of the manufacture of brass and bell-metal ware are:—in the Sadar subdivision, Boinchi, Morārhāt and Khāmārpārā within the Bānsberiā Municipality and Gholsarā in thāna Polbā; in the Serampore subdivision, Janāi and Chāmpādāngā; and in the Arāmbāgh subdivision, Bāli and Kumārganj in thāna Goghāt. The different kinds of brassware are:—in Bānsberiā, saucers (*rekābi*), bowls (*bognā*), jugs (*gādu*) and toys for children; in Gholsarā, water-pots (*lotās*); in Janāi fishing reels; in Chāmpādāngā betel-boxes (*pāndāns*). Ordinary utensils are made in Bāli and Kumārganj, and bell-metal ware at Boinchi. Under this head reference may be made of the Newtonian telescopes of brass manufactured at Hooghly by Messrs. S. K. Dhur and Brothers.

Sugar manufacture. A considerable amount of raw sugar is made in the villages from sugarcane. The juice, after being expressed, is boiled into a thick syrup called *gur*, which is sold locally and is not exported. The *gur* is put into baskets for being drained and refined by a weed named *ganj* (Vallisneria spiralis). The portion remaining within the basket, when dried, becomes crystallized and forms the raw sugar of commerce. If thoroughly drained and dried, the bleached sugar is called *dolo;* if imperfectly freed from molasses, *khār gur*. The liquid which is drained away is known as molasses (*jholā gur* or *māth gur*). The molasses are utilized for the distillation of country spirit or are used by the poor. The *dolo* and *khār gur* are exported for manufacture into refined sugar. For producing sweetmeats the local confectioners make a little refined sugar by boiling the coarse sugar and removing the impurities with the aid of some milk. Date juice is made into *gur* and refined into sugar, and the same is done with palm juice, the crystalline sugar (*michhri*) produced from it being highly esteemed for its medicinal value.

Paper-making. A few Musalmāns make a little country paper at Niyālā and Mahānād near Pānduā, at Kolshā in thāna Polbā, and at Bāli Dīwānganj in thāna Goghāt. The manufacture is almost extinct owing to the cheapness and superior quality of mill-made paper, but the local paper still commands a sale, at the rate of Rs. 10 per 100 sheets, among Calcutta traders for use as account books.

Carpentry. Chairs, desks and wooden boxes are made in considerable numbers by carpenters in French Chandernagore, and in Keotā and

Chinsura. Articles of ebony, chiefly hookah stems (*nalchās*), are manufactured at Kāmārpokhur, Srīpur, Badanganj and Kayāpāt in the Goghāt thāna.

Chikan or "chicken" work (from the Persian *chikin*, *i.e.*, art embroidery) is produced in some villages in thānas Dhaniākhāli (outpost Dādpur) and Chanditalā, chiefly by Musalmān ladies. This is embroidery work, the pattern being first sketched out in paper and then worked in on the cloth. The work is popular with European ladies and is exported to Europe, America and Australia by Calcutta dealers. Some of the local people also go to America, South Africa and Australia to trade in *chikan* goods. Chikan work.

Good baskets are made at Māyāpur, Bandipur and Magrā, and serviceable mats and wickerwork articles at Serampore, Bandipur, Akri, Borai and in several villages of the Arāmbāgh subdivision. Common pottery is made in every important village of the district; the best known articles are those made at Baidyabāti, Bhadreswar, Sugandhya and Chandernagore. Colour-printing on cloth is carried on at Serampore, the handkerchiefs prepared by the printers being exported to Rangoon, Madras and Mauritius. Dyeing is also a prosperous industry at the same place. It is reported that the dyers use European aniline dyes. Miscellaneous.

The earliest trade centre in this district, so far as can be traced, was Tribenī, which even during the period of Hindu rule was a flourishing place of pilgrimage. Under the early Musalmān rulers it was the head-quarters of the south west province of Bengal, until the seat of Government was removed 4 miles inland to Sātgāon, on the Saraswatī. This transfer must have taken place before 729 H. (1328 A.D.), for a coin of Muhammad Bin Tughlak minted at Sātgāon in that year has been found. In course of time Sātgāon became an important entrepôt from which goods, both local and imported, were distributed over the country, partly by pack-bullocks but chiefly by boats. It is not clear whether the town had any sea-borne trade, but probably it had, for Tāmralipti had ceased to be a port, and the Hooghly was deep enough for the coasting vessels of those days. After the middle of the 15th century the Portuguese began to trade with Bengal and were attracted by Sātgāon, or as they celled it Porto Piqueno, *i.e.*, the little port of the Ganges. This is clear from the remarks of the Portuguese historian De Barros (*circa* 1560 A.D.), who speaking of the Ganges wrote :—"Its first mouth, which is on the west, is called Satigan, from a city of that name situated on its streams, where our people carry on their mercantile transactions." During the century the trade of Sātgāon was at its zenith. The Bengali poem *Chandi* of Kavi-kankan (*circa* 1600) TRADE.

bears testimony to its prosperity, and Cesare dei Federici, who visited the place about 1580, remarked:—"In the port of Satagan every yeere l de thirtie or thirtie-five ships great and small, with rice, cloth of bombast of diverse sortes, lacca, great abundance of sugar, mirabolans dried and preserved, long pepper, oyle of zerzeline, and many other sorts of merchandise. The citie of Satagan is a reasonable fair citie for a citie of the Moores, abounding with all things."

Outside Sātgāon trade was mostly carried on in *hāts* held once or twice a week, along the river bank. Federici described the system thus:—"I was in this kingdom four moneths, whereas many marchants did buy or fraight boates for their benefites, and with these barkes, they goe up and downe the river of Ganges to faires, buying their commoditie with a great advantage, because that every day in the weeke they have a faire, now in one place and now in another: and I also hired a barke and went up and downe the river and did my businesse."*

Before the Mughal conquest of Bengal in 1575 A.D., the Portuguese had been allowed to settle at Hooghly, 4 miles south of Sātgaon, where they erected extensive godowns; and as the shipping was mostly in their hands, they succeeded in transferring the sea-borne trade to this town. Hooghly, wrote Ralph Fitch (1588), "is the place where the Portugals keep in the countrey of Bengala . . . and standeth a league from Satagan; they call it Porto Piqueno." The *Ain-i-Akbari* (completed in 1596-7 A.D.) notices that the *sair* duties from *bandar-ban* (port dues) and *mandavi* (market dues) in *Sarkār* Sātgāon amounted to 1,200,000 *dams* or Rs. 30,000, and states that Hooghly had become the chief port, though Europeans still carried on an import and export trade with Sātgāon.

During the first thirty years of the 17th century Sātgaon declined; and even the inland trade was mostly diverted to Hooghly. Occasional notices of Sātgāon and its commerce appear, however, in the letters received by the English East India Company from its servants in the East, *e g.*, Mr. Samuel Bradshaw wrote in 1610: —"Nutmegs, Cloves and Maces sell exceeding well in Surratt, Musulapatan, Pipely, Satagan, Arracan and divers other places, so that no great quantity be thither carried." Sātgāon was also referred to several times by the English Agents in Patna in connection with its quilts. One letter says:—"I shall provide some quiltes of Sutgonge, wrought with yellowe silke, at reasonable rates;" and another letter refers to specimens of "Sutgonge" quilts bought at such reasonable rates. The

* Hakluyt's *Voyages*, etc., reprint, Vol. V, p. 411.

Portuguese trade with Sātgāon is also mentioned in a letter from Patna dated 6th August 1620 :—"There are latlye come up divers frigitts of Portingalls from Sutgonge, whose merchants buye up all they can laye hand of." In these references Sātgaon probably includes Hooghly.

The trade of Sātgaon was by this time of little value, and the place derived what importance it had from the Imperial custom-house being still located there. Hooghly is now repeatedly mentioned as the principal port of the Portuguese, under various names, *e.g.*, Golin, Golin, Gollye. For example, in a letter of the Patna Agent to the English Company dated 30th November 1620, it is said :—"The Portingalls of late yeares have had a trade here in Puttana, cominge up with their frigitts from the bottom of Bengalla, where they have two porttes, the one called Gollye, and the other Pieppullye, and therein are licenced by the Kinge to inhabitt. Gollye is theire cheefest porte, where theye are in greate multitudes, and have yearlye shippinge both from Mallacka and Cochine." In fact, the export trade of the locality appears to have been almost entirely in the hands of the Portuguese, and this is implicitly admitted in several letters from the English Agents at Surat.

In 1632 Hooghly was besieged and captured by the army of the Bengal Nawāb, and though the Portuguese were soon after allowed to return, their power was irretrievably lost. Hooghly now became the seat of the local *faujdār* and the Imperial custom-house was located there. The Dutch, the English and, later on, the French, also settled in the place, so that in spite of the decline of the Portuguese power trade flourished. W. Clavell, the English Chief, in his account of the trade of Hooghly (1676), noticed that the Dutch exported rice, oil, butter, hemp, cordage, sail cloth, raw silk, silk fabrics, saltpetre, opium, turmeric, "neelaes" (indigo-dyed cloths), ginghams, sugar, long pepper, bees-wax, etc. Besides cotton and tusser cloths, which were woven by weavers in the neighbourhood, silk, sugar, rice, wheat, oil, butter, coarse hemp and gunnies were brought in from the adjoining country. Saltpetre was also brought from Bihār and apparently refined at Hooghly. The articles required by the Company were obtained either by contract with the local merchants or by sending out "banians" (brokers) with passes authorizing them to convey their purchases free of custom. Passes for the goods sold to merchants in Hooghly were also issued to save the latter from having to pay transit dues.

In the first half of the 18th century the trade of the district continued to expand. The Dutch at Chinsura, the French at

Chandernagore, the Danes a little below it at Dinemārdāngā, the Ostend Company at Bānkibazar opposite to it, had considerable settlements, and though the English Company had removed their head-quarters to Calcutta, they had agents in Hooghly, where a great part of their purchases were made The Imperial custom-house, moreover, was at Hooghly, so that both sea-borne and the internal trade had to pass through it, to pay customs duty or to get free passes. The amount thus levied may be realized from the fact that in 1728 ***Sair Bakshbandar***, *i.e.*, export and import dues on foreign merchandise, yielded Rs. 2,21,975 at the rate of 2½ per cent. on the value of the goods, and, with the tolls on 9 *ganjes* or subordinate stations, realized Rs. 2,42,014 *sicca* rupees.

Alexander Hamilton, who visited Hooghly early in the 18th century, has left an interesting description of its trade (1723). "The town of Hooghly drives a great trade, because all foreign goods are brought thither for Import, and all goods of the Product of Bengal are brought thither for exportation. And the Moghul's Furza or Custom House is at this place. It affords rich cargoes for fifty or sixty ships yearly, besides what is carried to neighbouring Countries in small vessels, and there are vessels that bring Saltpetre from Patna, above 50 yards long and five broad, and two and half a deep, and can carry above 200 tons . . To mention all the particular species of goods that this rich country produces is far beyond my skill; but in our East India Company's sales, all the sorts that are sent hence to Europe may be found; but opium, long pepper and ginger are commodities that the trading shipping in India deals in, besides tobacco and many sorts of piece-goods, that are not merchantable in Europe."

Trade suffered greatly during the wars waged between 1740 and 1760, but revived with the cession of the district to the English in 1760. The trade of other European nations fell off, except during the long wars in Europe at the close of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, when the British were only too glad to ship their goods in neutral vessels. On the whole, however, the volume of trade was diverted to Calcutta, the result being that the *sair* duties of Hooghly fell from Rs. 2,39,548 in 1757 to Rs. 62,644 only in 1783.

Throughout these years the East India Company held a monopoly of the sea-borne trade with India. No British subject, either abroad or at home, could engage in it, except with the express permission of the Company, while non-officials were debarred from internal trade by not being

allowed to reside in the mofussil without the special permission of the Governor-General. The only general exception to the rule was made in the case of the commanders and officers of the ships employed in the Company's service, who were allowed a certain proportion of tonnage freight free. The Company's European servants in Bengal also traded privately in the interior, either with the tacit permission of their superiors or clandestinely; but this was an infringement of the monopoly of the Company, which had factories or commercial residences for the manufacture or purchase of exportable goods, *e.g.*, at Golāghor (near Magrā and Haripāl in this district.

In 1793, on the renewal of the Company's charter, private individuals were permitted to trade in all articles other than piece-goods and military or naval stores; and British residents in India were allowed to act for foreigners and to export annually a certain quantity of goods in the Company's ships. In consequence of this measure, the value of the Company's exports from Bengal fell from Rs. 1,14,00,151 in 1792-93 to Rs. 34,65,190 in 1805-06; while the value of goods exported from Bengal to London by private persons and by the Company's commanders and officers increased from Rs. 84,08,800 in 1795 to Rs. 1,31,97,400 in 1801. The articles usually exported on behalf of the Company were piece-goods, raw silk, saltpetre, sugar, opium, hemp and, occasionally, indigo.

As the Company's administrative work increased with the expansion of their territory, they withdrew more and more from trade. Public opinion in England also pronounced strongly against the Company's dual position as Governors and traders. By the Act of 1833, renewing their charter for 20 years, Parliament deprived it of all its commercial privileges, and by 1836 the commercial residencies and *aurungs* or factories were abolished, leaving private trade and industry free from any rivalry on the part of the Company. In 1827 the post of Customs Collector at Hooghly was abolished, his duties being amalgamated with those of the Collector of Land Revenue; and in 1837 the customs duties were abolished. Figures given by the Collectors of Hooghly for the district trade between 1819 and 1833 show a gradual increase in its value from Rs. 39,99,796 in 1819 to Rs. 69,41,490 in 1833, the exports always largely exceeding the imports and being on the average five to six times as great. During the next sixty years (1840-1900) the trade of Hooghly grew steadily. In the first twenty-five years its growth was rapid owing to the opening of the East Indian Railway, the improvement of roads and waterways, and, in a minor degree, the establishment of steamer services along

the Hooghly. In the next thirty-five years the increase was slow, for the people suffered terribly from Burdwān fever.

At the present time the trade of the district is almost entirely with Calcutta and Howrah, the principal entrepôts being connected with those places by road or river. The chief exports are:—rice and paddy from the Arāmbāgh subdivision and fine rice from the other two subdivisions; pulses, vegetables and fruits, sold at Sheorāphuli and Bhadreswar; cotton cloths from the Serampore mills, and hand-loom cloths, specially those called Farāsdāngā; jute, ropes and gunny-bags from the mills of the Serampore subdivision; bricks and tiles from the brickfields along the Hooghly; tusser cloths from Bāli Dīwānganj; brassware from Bānsberiā; and fine sand quarried from the Saraswatī near Magrā. The principal imports are rice, wheat, *ghī*, salt, tobacco, spices, jute, piece-goods, kerosene oil, coal, timber and lime. The crops of common rice and wheat raised in the Sadar and Serampore subdivisions being insufficient for local consumption, those grains have to be imported from Calcutta, Bihār and the neighbouring districts. Salt is brought from the *golās* at Sālkhiā, kerosene oil from Budge-Budge, jute from Eastern Bengal, *ghī* from up-country or Calcutta, English piece goods, yarns and spices from Calcutta, coal from Burdwān and Mānbhūm, and lime from Burdwān and Sylhet. No reliable statistics of imports and exports are available, but the general impression is that the exports largely exceed the imports, thus leaving a balance of trade in favour of the district.

Hāts and *melās*. All the riparian towns have bazars or daily markets for the sale of goods, and so have many of the largest villages, *e.g.*, Magrāganj, Guptipārā and Boinchi in the Sadar subdivision, and Bhadreswar, Haripāl and Tārakeswar in the Serampore subdivision. *Hāts*, *i.e.*, periodical markets held once or twice in the week, are, however, still common. Of these, the most important are Mallik Kāsim's *hāt* at Hooghly and those at Mahānād and Rājhāt in Polbā thána; at Pānduā, Dhaniākhāli and Sheorāphuli in the Serampore thána; at Singur, Chanditalā and Siakhala in Chanditalā thāna; at Rājbalhāt in Kristanagar thānā; at Krishnagar and Bandar in Khānākul thāna; at Arāmbāgh and at Bāli Dīwānganj in Goghāt thāna. Bhadreswar and Sheorāphuli are the chief marts for fruits, vegetables and fish; Mallik Kāsim's *hāt*, Magrāganj and Dīwānganj for rice and paddy; Dhaniākhāli, Serampore, Rājbalhāt and Bāli Dīwānganj for cloths, and Bāli for tusser fabrics. Considerable sales also take place at religious festivals (*melās*), of which the largest and the most important

are those held at Māhesh (Serampore) during the car festival, at Tārakeswar during the Sivarātri and Charak festivals, and at Tribenī during the Uttarāyanā and Bāruni festivals. Pānduā also attracts a considerable number of Musalmān pilgrims in the months of January and April.

CHAPTER XII.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

ROADS. Old roads. THE first map showing roads in the tract of country of which this district forms part is that of Valentyn, which was based on data collected by the Dutch Governor Van den Broucke (1658-64). Two roads are entered on his map—one, a Pādishāhi or royal road, extending through Burdwān to Midnapore, and the other, a smaller road, which starting from Burdwān, passed through Salimābād and Dhaniākhāli to Hooghly. The former was an important military route, being used by troops in the rebellion of 1696, in the march of Shujā-ud-dīn to Murshidābād and in the wars of Alī Vardi Khān. With these two exceptions, the district, when ceded to the British in 1765, had no road worthy of the name, but only fair-weather tracks hardly passable in the rains. Bridges were few and far between, and those that existed owed their origin to the generosity and public spirit of some wealthy individual rather than to the Mughal Government. During the next twenty years these tracks were repaired and widened, though roughly and irregularly. From Rennell's Atlas, plate VII (1779), it appears that the most important roads were those connecting Sālkhiā (Howrah) with various places in the interior. One, running northwards along the west bank of the Hooghly to Ambuā near Kālnā, passed through bally, Alīnagar, Serampore, Ghiretti, Chandernagore, Chinsura, Hooghly, Bandel, Bānsberiā, Trebenī, Nayāsarāi, Dirga and Inchurā. A second road passed north-west through Chandītalā and Dhaniākhāli, to Salimābād in the Burdwān district: while a third went west and then north-west through Kristonagar and Rājbalhāt to Dīwānganj. Between these main roads lay numerous cross-roads connecting the more important villages, more than a dozen such cross-roads being entered in plates VII and XIX. None of the roads appear to have been metalled.

In May 1830 the following were reported as the principal roads in the district (1) Bāli to Kālnā *viâ* Inchurā, (2) the Grand Trunk Road from Hooghly to the north of India *viâ* Burdwān (3), the Old Benares road, (4) Ghiretti to Dwārhātā, (5) Burdwān to

Midnapore *via* Koerganj, (6) Ellipur *via* Singur to Hooghly, and (7) Hooghly to Bhāstārā *via* Polbā. The Magistrate reported that these roads were constructed by Government many years before for commercial and military purposes. It is clear that, having made the roads, the Government of the day paid little attention to their maintenance, in spite of numerous complaints. In 1796, for example, the Court of Circuit called the attention of the Governor-General to their wretched state and to the encroachments of zamīndārs and cultivators on the road-way. In 1815 a similar representation was made to Government by the Superintendent of Police, L. P.; and in February 1830, after an extensive tour through the district, the Magistrate of Hooghly reported that with the exception of the old Benares and Grand Trunk Roads, he "encountered nothing deserving the name of a road. Thoroughfares are even frequently entirely obliterated, and I have made my way in succession to several villages over no better path than a ridge through intervening paddy fields." The military authorities were loud in their complaints, the justice of which was admitted by the Magistrate, who in 1837 wrote that he could do nothing without funds. "I am sorry to say that, with the exception of the great lines of communication which are kept up by Government, and which, by the way, are frequently in a wretched state, no provision whatever exists for making or repairing roads or bridges in the interior of the district. There is not a single road in the district which a European vehicle could traverse, while the number passable for hackeries in the rains are lamentably few."

Of the roads mentioned in the list of 1830, the Bāli-Inchurā road was the old Murshidābād road, and the Burdwān-Midnapore road was the old Pādshāhi road, both shown in Rennell's Atlas. The Old Benares Road was a later addition, being constructed by Government as the most direct route to the Upper Provinces. The work was under the charge of Captain Rankin, who had to face a number of difficulties, *e.g.*, we find him complaining in 1782 of obstruction by the Rāmgarh zamīndār and of damage done by ryots, and asking for an order on the "renter" of Burdwān for Rs. 10,000 and for *parwānas* on the zamīndārs of Pānchet, Bishnupur, Burdwān and Hooghly to supply him with coolies; this request was granted by the Board of Revenue.* He was in charge at least up to 1797, for in January of that year there is mention of his being very angry with the Darogā of Haripāl for not getting him coolies. Lieutenant (afterwards

* Bengal Manuscript Records, Vol. I, Letters 115-16, 834, 840 1, 873, 933.

Major) W. D. Playfair, who was in charge from 1816 to 1828, put down mile-stones and divided the road into 7 or 8 sections, each under a road *sarkār*. The road was then 14 feet wide, but the Military Board recommended that it should be widened to 20 feet. In 1828 the road was made over to the Magistrate, and two years later the then Magistrate, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Frederick Halliday, reported to Government the extent to which it had suffered from floods, especially that part of it west of the Dāmodar. By 1840 the troops had ceased to use the road, and it had, at least in the flooded parts, become no better than a fair-weather track. Even three years before this only 32 out of 58 bridges were standing, and their arches were being fast worn away. The dāk bungalows were out of repair, and the furniture in them was being stolen piece by piece or going to decay.

Grand Trunk Road. The road now known as the Grand Trunk Road is that running from Howrah to Burdwān *viâ* Hooghly; but in the forties and fifties of the last century the name was applied to the road from Calcutta to Burdwān *viâ* Hooghly town, which crossed the Bhāgīrathī at Paltā Ghāt. Still earlier, only the portion which branched north-west from Hooghly to Burdwān was called by this name. Hooghly town was, in fact, a junction, from which one great route ran north-west to Benares, while another road ran north to Kālnā and then to Nadiā and Murshidābād along the Ganges.

The history of the present road begins in the early years of the 19th century. In 1804, the river having encroached upon the portion between Serampore and Chandernagore, Mr. R. Blechynden was appointed to survey a new alignment with 500 convicts under an European sergeant. In 1820 the part of the road north-west of Hooghly was described as "very indifferent, and in some places next to impassable, specially west of Pānduā." Its reconstruction was taken in hand several years later; and in 1829 the "new road" was first used by troops in preference to the old Benares road. The Rājā of Burdwān in that year gave Rs. 36,000 for the construction of a bridge across the Kuntiā Nullah at Magrā; in the following year the road was metalled between Hooghly and Magrā; and by 1836 it had been extended beyond Burdwān. The work is said to have cost fifty lakhs, and is one of the monuments of Lord William Bentinck, who, it is said, was nicknamed William the Conqueror because parts of the road were metalled with *kankar*!

Murshidābād road. The older road to Murshidābād *viâ* Inchurā and Kālnā was also much used by troops and travellers going to Nadiā, Murshidābād and Monghyr. It was apparently unbridged at first, but

in 1828 Prān Krishna Hāldār, zamīndār of Jagdispur, gave Rs 13,000 for a *pucca* bridge over the Saraswatī at Tribenī. Prān Krishna Hāldār was rewarded for his liberality by the Governor-General allowing him to post 6 sepoys as sentries at the gates of his house. A suspension bridge was also constructed at Nayāsarai from money raised by public subscriptions; but both bridges were swept away by a flood in August 1834, and it was not till 1839 that the Court of Directors permitted the surplus of the Ferry Fund to be expended in reconstructing them.

Dhaniākhāli road. Regarding the road from Hooghly to Dhaniākhāli, Mr. Toynbee writes:—"A very special interest attaches to this road, as it was mainly constructed by funds raised by public subscription, and because in the supervision of the expenditure of those funds by a committee of Indian gentlemen we have the germ of the Road Cess Committee and of the Local Self-Government scheme, which was brought to maturity some 50 years afterwards." The amount raised was between Rs. 7,000 and Rs. 8,000, and work was begun in 1838, the Magistrate appointing "Pooran Babu, zamīndār of Makhalpore, Chāker Ram Singh of Dharampore, and Roy Radhagobinda Singh of Hatishala, to superintend this great public work, to see that the money of the subscribers is well laid out, and to settle all disputes which may arise regarding land."

Modern roads. Outside municipal areas the management of the public roads rests with the District Board, which provides the funds for their maintenance except in the case of two Provincial roads which are maintained from the Provincial Fund under the supervision of the Engineer of the District Board. These Provincial roads are (1) the new Grand Trunk Road from Uttarpārā to Paltā Ghāt, 12 miles 5½ furlongs long. Its average width is 25 feet, of which 8 feet are metalled with stone, except within urban areas, where the metalling is 12 feet wide; it crosses the Dānkuni drainage channel by a small bridge. This is an old road shown in Rennell's Atlas, slightly altered at places. (2) The old Grand Trunk Road from Paltā Ghāt, *viâ* Hooghly and Pānduā to Burdwān, with a length of 33 miles within this district, while 3 miles pass through the territory of French Chandernagore. It has a width of 24 feet, of which 8 feet are metalled with stone and laterite; it is carried over the Saraswatī at Sātgaon and the Kunti at Magrā by iron bridges. This is the old road from Ghiretti to Benares.

Provincial.

District Board Roads. The District Board roads are grouped under three heads, viz., metalled, unmetalled and village roads. In 1908 the District Board had under its direct control 512 miles of road, of which

nearly 80 miles were metalled. Twenty roads were partially metalled or metalled throughout, nine being metalled throughout. Most of the latter are short in length, the principal being the Pānduā-Kālnā road (13 miles), the Uttarpārā-Kālipur road (4½ miles), and the Arāmbāgh-Nayāsarai road (6 miles) The metalling is usually 8 feet wide, and consists of stone, brick *jhāmā*, or both. The smaller roads are usually 10 to 14 feet wide and the larger roads 14 to 20 feet; but the width rises to 25 feet in the case of old roads like the Benares and Nāgpur roads, while the metalled road from Chanditalā to Janāi (1 mile 2½ furlongs) is 30 feet wide. The metalling is expensive, repairs alone costing, in 1907-08, Rs. 446 per mile as against Rs. 45 in the case of unmetalled roads.

The District Board roads converge chiefly on the through roads, such as the Grand Trunk, Old Benares and Burdwān-Midnapore roads, and on the riparian towns on the Hooghly, (which are served by the East Indian Railway), or act as feeder roads to the branch and light railways. The best roads are the Grand Trunk Road and those joining them, which, even where unmetalled, admit of wheeled traffic throughout the rains. The roads in thāna Goghāt are also in good condition owing to the kankariferous soil, and cost comparatively little to keep up. These in the interior of the Sadar and Serampore subdivisions are much cut up by water channels, and, being generally unmetalled, with a surface composed of sticky earth, are hardly passable during the rains. The worst roads, however, are those lying in thānas Arāmbāgh and Khānākul, which are not only intersected by numerous channels, but also exposed to the annual floods of the Dāmodar. Hence, for half the year, wheeled traffic is next to impossible; the roads are fewer in number than elsewhere; and their upkeep is more costly.

The principal District Board roads arranged according to subdivisions are as follows. In the Sadar subdivision:—(1) Chinsura to Khānpur *viâ* Dhaniākhāli, with a length of 24¾ miles, of which 11⅞ miles are metalled, with three bridges over the Saraswatī, the Kunti and the Ghiā. This is the old road of 1838. (2) Hooghly to Majnan, 18⅝ miles, with a bridge over the Saraswatī and two bridges over the Kunti. (3) Chaku Singh's road, from the Grand Trunk Road at Magrā to Khānpur, 21¼ miles, with three bridges, of which two are built over the Kantul and the Ghiā. (4) Pānduā to Kālnā *viâ* Inchurā, 13 miles, metalled throughout, with a masonry bridge, over the Behulā and a suspension bridge over the Bagul. (5) Boinchi to

Dasgharā *via* Dhaniākhāli, $18\frac{1}{2}$ miles, with 5 bridges. (6) Dhaniākhāli to Haripāl in Serampore, $9\frac{3}{4}$ miles, of which 7 miles are metalled, with a masonry bridge over the Kānā Nadī. (7) Chandernagore to Bholā, 12 miles, with a masonry bridge on the Saraswatī. (8) Hooghly to Sātgaon, $3\frac{7}{8}$ miles. (9) Pānduā to Kalyānpur, nearly 8 miles. (10) Rāmnāthpur to Harāl, $9\frac{1}{4}$ miles. (11) Inchurā to Balāgarh, 6 miles. (12) Damurdā to Balāgarh, 7 miles. (13) Tribenī to Guptipārā, $16\frac{1}{2}$ miles, with an iron suspension bridge at Nayāsarai. This road is a part of the old Murshidābād road *viâ* Inchurā. (14) Sheyā to Alāsin, *viâ* Malipārā, 8 miles.

In the Serampore subdivision:—(15) Baidyabāti to Tārakeswar, $21\frac{1}{2}$ miles, of which 10 miles are metalled, with 5 masonry bridges, of which one is over the Kānā Dāmodar. (16) Nabagrām to Charpur, $13\frac{1}{2}$ miles, with 5 masonry bridges. (17) Konnagar to Kristarāmpur, $9\frac{1}{8}$ miles, with one masonry bridge. (18) Old Benares road from Devīpārā to Khatul, lying partly in the Arāmbāgh subdivision, with a length of nearly 50 miles, of which only $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles are metalled; it has one wooden, one brick and one light iron bridge. West of the Dāmodar, the 23rd mile is very sandy, while from the 35th to the 39th mile, the road is a mere track, being washed away every year by the Dāmodar floods (19 and 20) Bhadreswar to Nasibpur, and Nasibpur to Janāi, 13 miles (21) Dirghanga to Singur, $6\frac{5}{8}$ miles, with a light iron bridge and a small arched bridge. (22) Gangādharpur to Nawābpur, $8\frac{1}{8}$ miles. (23) Singur station to Masāt, $6\frac{3}{4}$ miles, with a wooden bridge. (24) Gaja to Rājbalhāt *viâ* Dwarhātā, $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles, with three bridges including a timber bridge over the Kānā Dāmodar and an iron bridge over the Rānāband Khāl. (25) Antpur to Sitāpur, $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles, with a light iron bridge over the Khurigāchi Khāl. (26) Masāt to Dhitpur (Howrah boundary), 6 miles.

In the Arāmbāgh subdivision the principal roads are (27) Arāmbāgh to Nayāsarai (Burdwān boundary), 6 miles, metalled throughout, with two arched bridges; in the rains this is the only passable road to Burdwān. (28) Arāmbāgh to Udrājpur $7\frac{3}{8}$ miles. (29) Arāmbāgh to Tetulmāri, 17 miles, with a masonry bridge; this is the old Nāgpur road. (30) Pundait to Mandali (Midnapore boundary), $15\frac{1}{8}$ miles This is the old Midnapore-Burdwān road. (31) Arāmbāgh to Arandi, $6\frac{5}{8}$ miles. (32) Māyāpur to Jagatpur *viâ* Khānākul, $16\frac{1}{4}$ miles; the greater portion of this road is under water during the rains. (33) Bigdas to Bāli Hāt, $6\frac{1}{4}$ miles. (34) Goghāt to Kumārganj, $7\frac{1}{4}$ miles, with a timber bridge over the Raghubāti Jalla. (35) Badanganj to Subirchak, 7 miles.

Village roads. The village roads, which are under the Local Boards, are fair weather roads intended for communication between important villages and markets. Several of them in the Arāmbāgh and Serampore subdivisions are 5 to 8 miles in length, are provided with culverts, and have an average width of 10 to 12 feet. They are thus nearly equal in importance to the smaller District Board roads. In 1908 there were 190 village roads under the Hooghly Local Board, 75 under the Serampore Local Board and 51 under the Arāmbāgh Local Board—in all 316, with a total mileage of some 600 miles. The average cost of repairs in 1907-08 was Rs. 15 per mile.

Inspection bungalows. There is a circuit-house at Hooghly, formerly the residence of the Judge-Magistrate, Mr. D. C. Smyth, which was purchased by Government for Rs. 16,000 in 1856. The second storey of the Serampore subdivisional court is used as an inspection bungalow. The District Board has inspection bungalows at the following places:—in the Sadar subdivision at Inchurā, Pānduā, Magrā (attached to the post-office bungalow) and Dhaniākhāli; in the Serampore subdivision at Haripāl, Dwārhātā and Tārākeswar; in the Arāmbāgh subdivision at Arāmbāgh, Māyāpur, Parsurā, Khānākul, Kumārpukhur, Kumārganj, Syāmbazar, and Surul Chanmatha (a hut). The land on which the Tārakeswar inspection bungalow was built was given free of cost by the Mahant of the temple. The more important railway stations, such as Serampore, Sheorāphuli, Chandernagore, Bāndel, Pānduā, and Tārakeswar, have waiting rooms for passengers.

Conveyances. Until comparatively recent times roads were few in number, except in thāna Goghāt, and generally only passable after the rains. Horses were rare, being used only by Musalmāns or up-country men. Elephants were still rarer, being only occasionally brought down from Northern India by Musalmān Governors or the chief zamīndārs. Most travellers went on foot, but the well-to-do used *sukhāsans*, *i.e.*, crescent shaped litters covered with camlet or scarlet cloth, and borne on poles, to which they were attached by iron hooks; they resembled the modern *chaturdolās*, in which brides and bridegrooms are now carried in the mofussil. They were eventually replaced by *pālkis* or palanquins carried by bearers chiefly Oriyās or Bāgdis. *Palkis* were at one time regarded as insignia of rank, *e.g.*, in the English factory at Hooghly one palanquin was allowed for the Chief and another for the second Factor, while in subordinate factories only one palanquin was allowed, and that was reserved for the Chief. We are further told that Murshid Kuli Khān, Nawāb of Bengal, forbade the

use of *palkis* by Hindu zamīndārs.* Bullock carts were also used by respectable people, and a description of the English Governor's procession to the English garden, 2 miles north of Hooghly, states that the members of the Council followed him in large coaches drawn by oxen. Respectable ladies were carried in palanquins or covered bullock carts. Goods were brought to the towns or markets by coolies or pack-bullocks. All these kinds of conveyances have survived to the present day, but have been supplemented, and in towns largely replaced, by the familiar *thikā gārī* and bicycle.

WATER COMMUNICATIONS. The river Hooghly has been from time immemorial a highway for the commerce of Western Bengal. The Dāmodar and Rupnārāyan are also waterways of importance, while in the rains almost all the creeks and channels are able to carry boats of at least 10 maunds burden. Hence, during these months, when most of the roads become impassable, boats are constantly in use.

Rivers and *khāls*. Of the numerous rivers and creeks (*khāls*) bounding or intersecting the district, the following are the most important:—(1) the Hooghly, navigable by boats and ordinary river steamers throughout its length along the district, *i.e.*, 50 miles; (2) the Dāmodar (25 miles), navigable by boats up to 1,000 maunds in the rains; (3) the Rupnārāyan, navigable, from Bandar downwards to Rānīchak (6 miles), by river steamers in the rains and by boats of 20 maunds at other times of the year; (4) the Dwārakeswar and Dhalkhisor, 20 miles down to Bandar, navigable by boats of 500 maunds in the rains; (5) the Behulā Khāl, 15 miles, by boats of 200 maunds in the rains; (6) the Kunti Khāl or Kānā Nadī, 40 miles, by small boats for about 20 miles up to its junction with the Ghiā, and by large boats of 500 maunds throughout its course in the rains; (7) the Saraswatī, 22 miles, by boats of 100 maunds in the rains; (8) the Dānkuni drainage channel by boats of 20 maunds; (9) the Bally Khāl, 8 miles, by boats of 10 maunds in the dry season and of 50 maunds in the rains; (10) the Mundeswarī or Kānā Dwārakeswar, from Bandar northwards for 10 miles, by boats of 100 maunds in the rains.

Country boats. The country boats now in use along the rivers and streams are much the same as they have been for centuries past.

Among them may be mentioned budgerows or "green boats," *i.e.*, flat-bottomed boats with a mast and low-roofed cabin; *bhars* or country boats of light draught, with broad bows suitable for carrying goods, and *bhaules* or smaller *pānsis*, *i.e.*, passenger

* Riyazu-s-Salatin, translated by Maulavi Abdus Salam (1904), p. 258.

boats with a cabin. The most common boats, however, are the *dingi* and *dongā*, which have been in use from time immemorial both for fishing and for carrying passengers and goods. *Dongās* or dug-outs are scooped out from a single tree trunk, *e.g.*, mango, *sāl* tree, cotton or palm. They have a capacity of 3 to 20 maunds, and are managed by one or two men. They may be as large as 30 feet long and $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet broad, and can carry, if necessary, more than 15 men. The *dingi* is 25 or 30 feet by 4 feet, with an arched roof of matting in the middle and a bamboo mast. It is usually managed by two men, one at the bow and the other at the stern, and its average burthen is 12 to 15 maunds. These small boats ply in the interior during the rains and for several months after the rains, until the channels dry up. In times of flood temporary rafts, made of three or four plantain stems, are used for passing over streams.

European vessels.

Formerly ships, sloops and pinnaces ascended the river Hooghly as far up as Sātgaon and Hooghly, and mention is also made of bigger vessels like men-of-war coming up to Hooghly and Chandernagore. As early as 1828 a line of steamers ran daily between Hooghly and Calcutta, carrying the mails and calling at Chinsura, Chandernagore, etc. At present there is a daily service of steamers, belonging to the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company, between Hātkholā Ghāt, Calcutta and Kālnā in Burdwān. The steamers are stern-wheelers of light draught, and carry passengers and smaller goods They leave on week-days, touching at Uttarpārā, Serampore, Sheorāphuli, Bhadreswar, Chandernagore, Chinsura, Hooghly, Bānsberiā, Tribenī, Sije, Jiret, Srīpur, Somrā and Guptipārā on the west bank. This line is a convenient one for passengers for Tribenī and places further up, as they are situated at some distance from the East Indian Railway, which from Magrā junction diverges away from the river. On Sundays a steamer of the same company leaves Mir Bahar Ghāt (Calcutta) direct for Hooghly, starting at noon and returning before dusk. Another line of steamers runs from the Armenian Ghāt (Calcutta) to Rānīchak in the Midnapore district, opposite the point where the boundaries of the Hooghly and Howrah districts meet. This is the most convenient way of reaching Khānākul and Krishnagar. During the summer and the latter part of winter, these steamers stop at Teyālis Ghāt, a mile below Rānīchak. In the rains small steamers go up to Ghātāl, touching at Bandar in this district.

Ferries.

There are a number of ferries across the Hooghly, most of which belong to the zamīndārs and the municipalities. Two only have been made over to the District Board of Hooghly, viz.,

that at Paltā Ghāt and that at Telinipārā, of which the first is valuable, having an average rental of more than three thousand rupees. It has four country boats for passengers and two for cattle; while the second has a green boat and two ordinary country boats for passengers and cattle. On the Old Benares road there is a ferry at Parsurā across the Dāmodar, which plies only in the rains. Further along this road there are ferries at Balarāmpur, at Harinkholā and Sodpur, where it crosses the Muneswarī, and at Haraditya on the *khāl* of the same name The Asadkholā ferry on the Burdwān Midnapore road, though declared a public ferry, has not been farmed out, as the stream is generally fordable in all seasons. The following is a list showing municipal ferries and the proportions in which the proceeds are divided:—Hooghly Bazar and Bābuganj ($\frac{3}{5}$ths to Hooghly and $\frac{2}{5}$ths to Naihāti); Nimaitalā (half to Baidyabāti and half to Government); Kanhaidiwāntalā, Court and Jagannāth Ghāt (half to Serampore and half to Government); and Uttarpārā (half to Uttarpārā and half to Government).

The main line of the East Indian Railway enters the district at Uttarpārā, crossing the Bally Khāl by a large iron bridge, and leaves it a little beyond Boinchi. It has a length of about 41 miles in the district, and in this length there are 19 stations. There are also 2 branch lines, viz., from Sheorāphuli to Tārakeswar (22 miles) and from Bāndel to Naihāti (3 miles); while another large branch from Bandel to Kātwā is under construction. The Bengal Provincial Railway from Tribenī to Tārakeswar, 33 miles long, is practically a feeder to the East Indian Railway line, which it crosses at Magrā junction. There are also 2 small lines in the south, viz., the Howrah-Shiākhālā Light Railway and the extension of the Howrah-Amtā Light Railway from Bargāchhiā to Chāmpādāngā. RAILWAYS.

The East Indian Railway line from Howrah to Hooghly was opened for passenger traffic on 15th August 1854, and was extended to Pānduā a fortnight later, and to Rānīganj in February of the following year. Among the subsequent additions to the line, the following may be mentioned:—(1) The opening of a branch line to Tārakeswar, a noted place of pilgrimage. The line was constructed by private enterprise and handed over to the East Indian Railway to work on the 1st January 1885. (2) The construction of a branch line to Naihāti (3 miles) on the Eastern Bengal State Railway over the Jubilee bridge at Hooghly. This great bridge, as yet the only permanent bridge over the Hooghly, has a length between abutments of 1,200 feet and is so called because it was opened by the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, in East Indian Railway.

the Jubilee year, 1887. (3) The construction of the Hooghly-Kātwā branch, 65 miles long, which is now in progress.

Bengal Provincial Railway. The Bengal Provincial Railway line, on the 2 feet 6 inches gauge, was built by a company formed through the exertions of Mr. A. L. Ray. The first section from Tārakeswar to Basuā (12·5 miles) was opened to traffic in 1894, the second section from Basuā to Magrā (18·12 miles) in 1895, and the third section from Magrā to Tribenī (2·15 miles) in 1904. This railway line is financed and managed by Indians. There are altogether 16 stations on it, and through communication with Calcutta is afforded by a jetty with a gangway at Tribenī, which connects the line with the steamers of the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company. The working of the line is carried on under the Bengal Tramways Act of 1883 and is governed by two contracts, one relating to the main line concluded with the District Board of Hooghly in 1890, and the other concluded with the Secretary of State for India in 1904, by which a free grant of land was given for the Tribenī extension under certain conditions.

Light railways. The Howrah-Shiākhālā and a branch of the Howrah-Amtā light railways traverse thānas Chandītalā and Kristanagar in the Serampore subdivision. Both are on the 2 feet gauge and start from Howrah. The line to Shiākhālā is 19 miles long, of which more than 10 miles are in this district; there is also a branch line with a length of 3 miles from Janāi to Chandītalā. This line was opened up to Chandītalā in August 1897, and up to Shiākhālā in November of the same year. The Hooghly District Board has given the company the use of its roads for the line and guaranteed interest of 4 per cent. on the capital; in return for these concessions it receives half the net profits above 4 per cent. On the Howrah-Amtā line there is a branch from Bargāchhiā station to Chāmpādāngā on the Dāmodar, which was opened in 1908. Both these light railways are under the management of Messrs. Martin and Company.

POST OFFICES. In 1907-08 there were in this district 341½ miles of postal communication and 105 post offices, or one post office for every 11 miles. The number of postal articles delivered was 3,532,724, viz., 2,093,260 post cards, 1,136,018 letters, 118,872 packets, 169,338 newspapers and 15,236 parcels. The value of money orders issued was Rs. 14,66,885 and nearly equalled that of money orders paid, viz , Rs. 15,62,320, and there were 15,785 Savings Bank accounts deposits, the amount deposited being Rs 11,33,340

TELEGRAPH OFFICES. In the first quarter of the 19th century an experimental semaphore telegraph system was tried between Calcutta and Chunār. The experiment proved a failure and was abandoned

before 1830, in which year some of the semaphore towers were utilized for the Trigonometrical Survey of India. In this district five of them still survive, situated at Nālikul, Dilākhas, Hyātpur, Mobārakpur and Navasān. In 1907-08, besides the general telegraph office at Serampore, there were five postal telegraph offices, viz., at Chinsura, Hooghly, Magrā, Chandernagore and Tārakeswar, which issued 6,867 messages.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

REVENUE HISTORY.

THERE is no detailed record of the Hindu system of land revenue administration in Bengal, and a sketch of it can only be given by piecing together the fragmentary information which may be gathered from inscriptions and written works such as the *Dharma-sūtras*. It would appear that the *grām* or village was the unit of administration, and that excluding waste or uncultivable lands and lands occupied by houses or set apart for village commons, the village lands fell into two groups, *viz.*, those which paid rent, and those which did not. The latter included *brahmottar* or land granted to Brāhmans, *debottar* or land dedicated to the gods and their worship, and *chākrān* or service lands. Among service lands may be enumerated those held by village servants, such as barbers, washermen, carpenters, smiths, etc., besides watchmen and accountants, whose duties to the community were directly connected with the land and its crops.

The headman of the village, who was called *mandal*, had also a share in the village land by virtue of his office. He collected the rents due from the villagers, the amount of which varied according to the caste or position of the tenants, being less, for instance, in the case of Brāhmans and other high castes than in the case of the low castes; it also varied according to the nature of the produce of the fields, those growing special crops being assessed to a higher rental. The usual share reserved for the king was one-sixth, rising to one-fourth or even one-third in special instances; the village servants also received small shares of the produce at the time of reaping or threshing.

The villages were grouped into *vishayas*; *vishayas* into *mandalas* or circles; and *mandalas* into *bhūktis* or provinces, which had occasionally smaller divisions known as *bhāgas* or sub-provinces. Each of these groups was placed under a head called, respectively, *vishayi*, *mandalika* or *mahā-mandalika*, and Rājā or governor. These officers collected the revenue from their subordinates and sent it on to the king's treasury, probably

after deducting a commission. They were evidently removable at the king's pleasure, but the post in course of time became hereditary in many families.

The early Muhammadan rulers were Khâlj, *i.e.*, Turks, whose object it was to get as much out of the country as they could. They cared little for any organized system of collecting its revenues, and the accounts of their rule point to irregular exactions and enforced tribute rather than to any regular assessment. By the time Tribenī with the north of Hooghly was conquered, Bengal had come under the sway of the Balbani Sultâns, a somewhat more civilized set of rulers, from whose time onwards we meet with attempts at some organized system of collection. Judging from inscriptions, the country appears to have been divided into revenue divisions called *mahāls* which were placed under officers known as *shikdārs*. The *mahāls* were grouped into tracts known as *arsahs* under *sarlashkārs*, or military commanders, who had often the title of Vazir. The word *jungdar* was sometimes employed to denote a military commander in contradistinction to a *shikdār* or revenue officer, and the word *thânah* was also used, meaning a standing camp established in a newly conquered area. The details of assessment are not known; but probably the old system of collecting through village headmen was left undisturbed as far as possible.

Far-reaching changes were introduced by Sher Shāh; and the revenue rent-roll of Todar Mal, for Bengal at least, merely recorded the new or altered system adopted during the Afghān rule. The revenue division began to be called *pargana* and *sarkār* in preference to *mâhâl* and *arsah*, though in the *Ain-i-Akbari* the word *mahâl* was still used. Sher Shāh appointed in every *pargana* an *āmil*, a "god-fearing" *shikdār*, a treasurer, and two *kārkuns*, of whom one was to write in Persian and the other in the local vernacular. He ordered his governors to measure the lands every harvest, to fix the assessment with regard to the kind of grain they produced, to give one share to the cultivator and half a share to the *mukaddam* or headman In every *pargana* there was also a *kānungo*, from whom was ascertained the present, past and probable future state of the crops and revenue In every *sarkār* he appointed a chief *shikdār* and a chief *munsif* to watch the conduct of the *āmils* and of the people, to see that the *āmils* did not oppress or injure the people or embezzle the king's revenue, and also to settle disputes between *āmils* regarding the boundaries of *parganas*. It is said that the king changed the *āmils* every year or second year to prevent their oppressing the people or embezzling the revenue.

According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the people in Bengal were submissive and paid their rents duly. The demands of each year were paid by instalments in eight months, the ryots themselves bringing mohurs and rupees to the place appointed for the receipt of revenue. The harvests were abundant; measurement was not insisted upon; and the revenue demands were determined by an estimate of the crops—a custom confirmed by the Emperor Akbar—so that an actual division of grain between the Government and the ryots was not usual.

The details of *mahāls* given in the *Ain* show that the districts of Hooghly and Howrah were comprised in three *sarkārs*, viz., Sulaimānābād, Sātgāon and Madāran. The original *sarkārs* were evidently Sātgaon on the east and Madāran on the west; but during the Afghān rule a number of *mahāls* were taken from both and grouped into a new *sarkār*, named after the Sultān Sulaimān Kararāni, which cut through the middle of Sātgaon. Roughly, the two districts as now constituted appear to account for a third of the three *sarkārs*, whose total revenue, including customs, amounted to 43,758,088 *dams* or Rs. 10,93,952. The landlords belonged to various castes, and besides paying revenue had to furnish a force of 300 cavalry and 18,000 infantry. In addition to the zamīndārs, there were holders of *akta* or *jāgīr* lands, of which small allotments were scattered throughout the *sarkārs*.

The *Asil Tumar Jamā* of Todar Mal remained in force till the second viceroyalty of Prince Shāh Shuja (1648 A.D.). That prince revised the settlement chiefly by adding the revenue of new territory in the north-east, of the Sundarbans in the south, and of Midnapore and Balasore, which had been detached from Orissa. Some increase of revenue was also obtained by a new *hastabud* valuation of old *sarkārs*, amounting to more than a seventh of the former assessment. No change was made in the revenue divisions or in the other arrangements for collections. By 1722 a third revision was carried out by Nawāb Jafar Khān *alias* Murshid Kuli Khān, which was known as *Jamā Kamil Tumari.* The fiscal divisions were re-grouped into 13 *chaklās* or large circles, while the number of *parganas* was increased by subdividing them. The Hooghly and Howrah districts fell under two *chaklās*, the riparian strip under *chaklā* Hooghly or Sātgāon, and the remainder under *chaklā* Burdwān, these two *chaklās* being assessed to a revenue of Rs. 37,83,815 That amount was increased, however, by more than one-fourth by means of annual *hastabud* accounts and resumptions of *jāgīr* lands. During Jafar Khān's rule, the zamīndārs were formally recognized as regular

landholders and held personally responsible for the land revenue of their estates

In 1728 Murshīd Kulī Khān's successor, Nawāb Shujā-ud-dīn carried out a fresh settlement, known as the *Jamā Tumāri Tashkash*. The *khālsa* lands were now divided into larger and smaller zamīndāris, the present districts of Hooghly and Howrah being comprised in the larger zamīndāri of Burdwān (revenue Rs. 20,47.506), and in the *mazkuri* or smaller zamīndāris of Mandalghāt (Rs. 1,46,261), Arsā (Rs. 1,25,351) and Muhammad Amīnpur (Rs. 1,40,046). These zamīndāris did not include the small *jāgīrs*, chiefly *madadmāsh* or subsistence lands, given to religious and learned men. Besides land revenue proper, the lands were assessed to various extra cesses known as *ābwāb*, of which the number and rate varied in different districts. Mr. J. Grant, the Chief Sarishtadār of Bengal, in his *Analysis of the Finances of Bengal*, enumerated no less than twelve, including one imposed by Murshīd Kulī Khān, four imposed in the time of Shujā-ud-dīn, three in the time of Alī Vardi Khān, and four more by Mīr Kāsim Alī. These *ābwābs*, fluctuating in demand and gradually increasing in amount, were highly oppressive both to the ryots and the zamīndārs, and could only be realized with a great deal of trouble.

After the establishment of British rule a new system was gradually introduced. By the treaty of 1760 A.D. (confirmed by *sanads*) Mīr Kāsim Alī ceded to the British the Bengal zamīndāris of Burdwān, Calcutta and Chittagong, besides Midnapore (then in Orissa). The zamīndāri of Burdwān included the present districts of Hooghly and Howrah, except a small strip on the west bank of the Hooghly river which formed part of the zamīndāri *kismat* of Muhammad Amīnpur. This strip, with the rest of Bengal, finally came under British administration with the grant of the Dīwāni in August 1765. At first the collections in the Burdwān zamīndāri lands were supervised by covenanted servants of the Company, but this system proved a failure, for after defraying the expenses of reducing the refractory Rājā, the collections amounted in the first year (1760) to only Rs. 5,23,691 or one-fifth of the demand, and they were also small in the second year. In 1762 the zamīndāri was let out by public auction to temporary farmers for three years. The latter failed to discharge their agreements, and, to help them, an impost of 9 annas per *bighā* was levied on all the *bāze zamīn* lands or revenue-free alienations. This impost could only be partially realized, and not unnaturally made Mr. Johnston, the Superintendent, thoroughly unpopular.

In 1765 Mr. Verelst was appointed Supervisor of Burdwān. He restored the old system of managing the revenue, and gradually improved the *hastabud* collections, until in 1770 the receipts amounted to Rs 47,18,918, and the charges to Rs. 6,61,486, leaving a net income of Rs. 40,57,432. The famine of that year caused a considerable diminution in both the demand and the collections, which continued for several years. In 1783 the gross demand was Rs. 43,58.026, the net demand being Rs. 37,35,755, but the collections were only Rs 36,96,825, including arrears. As regards Muhammad Amīnpur, the revenue (with *ābwābs*) amounted to Rs. 3,38,560 in 1765, the year of the grant of the Dīwānī, but by 1783 had fallen to Rs. 2,55,113. How heavy the *ābwābs* were may be realized from the fact that in the latter zamīndāri they aggregated, in 1765, Rs 1,34,425 on a total revenue of Rs. 2,06,325, or no less than 65 per cent.; while in the Burdwān zamīndāri they amounted in 1760 to Rs. 8,49,099, or nearly 38 per cent. of the revenue demand (Rs. 22,51,306).

In 1784 Pitt's India Act ordered an enquiry into the complaints of dispossessed zamīndārs, and directed the Company to take steps forthwith "for settling and establishing, upon principles of moderation and justice, according to the laws and constitution of India, the permanent rules by which their respective tributes, rents, and services shall be in future rendered and paid." In 1786 the Court of Directors sent a despatch on the system of transacting business with the zamīndārs and other landholders. It assumed that sufficient information had been collected during the 21 years which had elapsed since the grant of the Dīwānī to enable a permanent assessment of land revenue to be made It, therefore, ordered that an assessment should be promptly fixed for ten years and that, if it proved satisfactory, it should be declared permanent at the end of that period. In the same year Lord Cornwallis was sent out as Governor-General with instructions to carry out the Directors' orders. On his arrival, however, he found that the information available was insufficient for the purpose. He therefore continued the annual settlements then in vogue and instituted further enquiries. These enquiries disclosed three facts. "*First*, that the Muhammadan revenue system of a fixed rate, varied and increased by cesses, the system which the Company was appointed to administer by the Imperial grant of 1765, had broken down, and no longer afforded protection to the cultivators. Its breakdown had been due partly to the accumulated weight of its own exactions, and partly to the altered economic relations of land to labour, resulting from the

depletion of the population by the famine of 1769-70. *Second*, that the record of customary rates had ceased to be a protection to the resident cultivators, and that the village registers had become to them a record of crushing obligations rather than a record-of-rights. *Third*, that the people had themselves made a movement to readjust rents to the altered economic conditions, by developing a body of non-resident cultivators or temporary tenants, whose presence in almost every village tended to reduce customary rates to the standard of supply and demand, and whose status had by 1787 legitimatized itself."*

These enquiries led to the Permanent Settlement of 1793, by which the assessment of land revenue was fixed in perpetuity. As regards the distribution of the assessment, Sir John Shore estimated that the British Government received 45 per cent. of the gross produce, the zamīndār and his under-renters 15 per cent. and the cultivator 40 per cent.† As regards the persons with whom the assessment was made, the Government got rid of all complexities, whether of origin, status or title, by establishing a uniform tenure for all zamīndārs; and, in addition to old allowances, made over to them in perpetuity whatever increment might be obtained either from the improvement of their estates or from the reclamation of waste land. As regards the cultivators, it was intended to protect them from enhancement of rents and exaction of cesses by giving them a statutory right to *pattas* stating the quantity of land held by them and the sum liable to be paid for it.

At first, the Permanent Settlement proved disastrous to the landholders who, one after another, broke down under the strain of having to pay their revenue punctually and in full. "Among the defaulters were some of the oldest and most respectable families in the country Such were the Rājās of Nadiā, Rājshāhi, Bishnupur, Kāsijora and others, the dismemberment of whose estates, at the end of each succeeding year, threatened them with poverty and ruin, and in some instances presented difficulties to the revenue officers in their endeavour to preserve undiminished the amount of the public assessment."‡ In this district the Rājā of Burdwān escaped the ruin which fell on other zamīndārs by leasing out his estates in perpetuity to middlemen. Such a divestment of responsibility was diametrically opposed to the purposes for which the Permanent Settlement had been framed, and to the declared expectation of its framers that the landholders would

---

* *Bengal MS. Records*, Hunter, Introduction, Ch. III, p. 65.

† Minute of Mr. Shore, 8th December 1789, para. Fifth Report 5, Madras Reprint (1883) pp. 599-600.

‡ Fifth Report of the Select Committee, Madras Reprint, p. 71.

devote themselves to improving the condition of the husbandmen. Nevertheless, it was generally discovered that this system formed the only means of escape from ruin for the old families of Bengal, who, encumbered with the costly paraphernalia of petty courts and military retainers, could not suddenly transform themselves into punctual rent-collectors and revenue-payers. By Regulation VIII of 1819 this *patni* system of subinfeudation was placed on a legislative basis. The Government also armed the landholders with new powers against the tenants; for example, the power to seize a tenant's person was granted them by the *Haftum* Regulation (VII of 1799), and the power to distrain a tenant's property by the *Panjum* Regulation (V of 1812). But these powers came too late to save the old zamīndārs, whose estates were sold up or who were reduced, like the Rājā of Burdwān, to the position of annuitants receiving every year the fixed sums due from *patnidārs*.

The Permanent Settlement also failed to protect the cultivators. It endeavoured to substitute for the village record-of-rights a new system of declaratory leases (*pattas*); the system of *kānungos* was abolished, and the *patwāris* became practically the zamīndārs' servants. The result was that the practice of giving *pattas* could not be enforced by the Collectors, who had little time and less information; while the *patwāris'* village registers ceased to exist or were instruments in the hands of the zamīndārs for the coercion of their tenants. As early as 1819 the Court of Directors drew the attention of the Government "to the state of insecurity and oppression in which the great mass of cultivators are placed;" but it was not till after forty years further correspondence and enquiry that the customary rights of the cultivators were legally recognized by a series of agrarian laws beginning with Act X of 1859.

LAND TENURES. The various forms of land tenure found in Hooghly are for the most part the same as in the neighbouring districts and a detailed description of them is not required, practically the only peculiar tenures being the service tenures held by *phānridārs*.

Estates. The number of revenue-paying estates borne on the revenue-roll of Hooghly (which for this purpose includes Howrah) was 4,309 in 1907-08; while the number of revenue-free estates assessed to cesses was 536. Of the revenue-paying estates, 3,973 are permanently-settled, while 101 are temporarily-settled and 235 are held direct under Government. Among the estates last named, the most interesting are the Chinsura and Serampore Khās Mahāls, which passed to the British from the Dutch and Danes, respectively. Among other estates, mention may be made of the

aima estates, which were originally tenures granted at a quit-rent. They were, in fact, fiefs assessed to a small revenue, and date back to the rule of the Muhammadans.

The number of estates in this district has increased considerably during the last half century owing to the subdivision of proprietary rights. In 1850 there were 2,784 revenue-paying estates held by 5,775 proprietors, and in 1870 the number of the former was 3,850 and of the latter 8,215. In 1873, though the area of the district had been considerably reduced by the transfer of estates to Burdwān and Midnapore, the number of revenue-paying estates had increased to 3,573; and, as already stated, there are now no less than 4,309 such estates on the revenue-roll. The cess returns show that the number of revenue-paying estates assessed to cesses is 7,953, in addition to 536 revenue-free estates, and that the number of recorded shareholders is 27,685.

One of the most common tenures is that known as the *patni* *tāluk*, which had its origin in the estate of the Mahārājā of Burdwān and then spread to other permanently-settled estates. A *patnī tāluk* is defined in Regulation VIII of 1819 as one created by a zamīndār and held at a rent fixed in perpetuity, the tenant furnishing collateral security for the rent, and binding himself to certain conditions regarding the sale of the tenure for arrears, and also to the sale of his other property in case the proceeds of the sale of the tenure are not sufficient to pay off the entire sum due. The records show that there are 1,397 *patnī* tenures in the district, paying to the zamīndārs a total rent of Rs. 9,09,219-8.

Patni tāluks.

A *dar-patnī* is an under-tenure created by a *patnīdār*, to whom its holder pays rent, and is similar to a *patnī* tenure in all respects. The district records return the number of these under-tenures in Hooghly at 200. *Se-patnī* is a *patnī* tenure of the third degree created by a *darpatnīdār*.

Other tenures are the usual *ijārās* or leases, which have no special characteristics. Among them may be mentioned (1) *mukarari ijārās*, *i.e.*, permanent or long-term leases granted at a fixed rate of rent for a valuable consideration, (2) ordinary *ijārās* or leases held for a limited term, (3) *dar-ijārās* or sub-leases subordinate to the foregoing, and (4) *zarpeshgi* or usufructuary leases granted for repayment of loans by collections of rents from the estate or *tāluk* so let out.

Ijārās.

Rent-free tenures are exceptionally numerous in Hooghly; in fact, perhaps in no other district in Bengal are tenures of this class scattered over such a large area. The following are the principal varieties of rent-free tenures:—(1) *Lākhirāj*, or rent-free

Rent-free tenures.

land granted as a reward for services performed or for some other special purpose. (2) *Debottar*, or lands granted for the worship of various Hindu gods, and vested in *sebāits* or trustees, who have no right to alienate such lands. (3) *Brahmottar*, or lands granted for the support of learned and pious Brāhmans. These are liable to be alienated. (4) *Mahattrān*, or lands assigned by zamīndārs for the maintenance of religious and learned men, or of poor men other than Brāhmans. (5) *Vaishnavottar*, or lands granted for the support of Vaishnavas. (6) *Pīrottar*, or lands resembling the *debottar* lands of the Hindus, being grants made by Muhammadans for the maintenance of the worship of *pīrs* or Musalmān saints. (7) *Wakf*, or lands granted by pious Muhammadans for the maintenance of mosques or *masjids*, and for the purpose of feeding *fakīrs* or religious mendicants. (8) *Chirāghi*, or lands granted for defraying the expense of providing lights at the tombs of Muhammadan saints. (9) *Nazrāt*, or lands presented for the maintenance of Muhammadan saints or holy men, and for defraying the expenses of festivals. (10) *Khairāti*, or lands granted solely for charitable purposes. (11) *Khānābāri*, or lands granted rent-free as sites of homesteads.

Service-tenures. There are a number of small private service-tenures held by *purohits*, or village priests, *nāpits* or barbers, *kāmārs* or blacksmiths, *mālis* or gardeners and makers of garlands for decorating idols, and *dhobās* or washermen.

Phānridārs. The only peculiar service tenure is that of the *phānridārs*, who were originally semi-military police holding rent-free lands and performing police duties. They date back to the early days of British rule and were described as follows by the Magistrate of Hooghly in 1828:—"In the *mahāls* formerly attached to Zilā Burdwān, and generally throughout this district, there are in each village two or three police *chaukīdārs* who have each an allowance of about 8 or 10 *bighās* of *chākrān* land; and besides this establishment of *pāiks*, there are certain individuals, denominated *phānridārs*, *simānadārs* and *digwārs*, to the former of whom in some cases a *naib* and generally several *chaukīdārs* are attached, in proportion to the extent of the *phānridār's* jurisdiction, and who are allowed from 50 to 200 *bighās* of land. These *phānridārs* are authorized to apprehend robbers and house-breakers, to report the occurrence of crimes to the police thānas, to patrol the villages attached to their *phānris*, to observe whether the *chaukīdārs* perform or neglect their duties, and generally to render every assistance to the police *dārogās*. The total number of *phānridārs* existing in this district amounted, from a very correct register

that I had made up in the year 1825, to 175, together with 32 *naibs* and 808 *paiks* and *piyādas*, and the total quantity of *chākrān* land attached to the *phānris* amounted to 14,763 *bighās*. The total number of village *chaukīdārs* amounts to between 10,000 and 12,000 men, and the quantity of *chākrān* land set apart for the maintenance of the whole body amounts to between 80,000 to 90,000 *bighās* of land. The above arrangements have existed, I understand, from time immemorial in this district, as well as in Burdwān and Midnapore, and were finally adopted by Government about the year 1762 or 1763, when Mr. Johnston was Collector of Burdwān."

As the *phānri* system had long been superseded by newer systems, and was of very little use, Government in 1881 sanctioned an arrangement by which, when any of these men died or were dismissed, the vacancy should not be filled up, and their lands, which were specially excluded from the Permanent Settlement, should be taken charge of and settled by the Collector. The revenue derived from them was to be devoted to maintaining a force of head-constables for patrolling villages and seeing that the *chaukīdārs* did their duties properly. The absorption of the *phānridārs* is still proceeding, but the proceeds of the resumed lands are no longer entirely applied to the maintenance of patrol head-constables, for it seems that the money was transferred to the head of land revenue by orders of the Board of Revenue in 1886, the origin of the fund having, apparently, been lost sight of. There are now only 54 *phānridārs* in possession of *phānridāri* lands.

CHAPTER XIV.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES AND STAFF.

For administrative purposes the district is divided into three subdivisions with headquarters at Chinsura, Serampore and Arāmbāgh. The headquarters (Sadr or Hooghly) subdivision is under the direct supervision of the Collector, who has a regular staff of five Deputy Collectors, with one or two Sub-Deputy Collectors. The Serampore and Arāmbāgh subdivisions are each in charge of a Subdivisional Officer, the former being assisted by a Deputy Collector and a Sub-Deputy Collector and the latter by a Sub-Deputy Collector. The Collector of Hooghly controls the administration of land revenue in Howrah, and also the collection of road and public works cesses for estates lying wholly or partly in that district.

REVENUE.

The land revenue and cess accounts of the Hooghly district still include those for Howrah, and it is only recently that separate accounts of the revenue from other sources have been kept for the two districts. The revenue of the district (including Howrah), under the main heads, increased from Rs. 21,90,000 in 1880-81 (when the income-tax had not been imposed) to Rs. 25,99,000 in 1890-91. During the next decade the accounts for stamps, excise and income-tax in Howrah were separated, and consequently the revenue of Hooghly fell to Rs. 23,78,000 in 1900-01. In 1907-08 it amounted to Rs. 24,83,351, of which Rs. 13,33,812 were derived from land revenue, Rs. 4,50,792 from excise, Rs. 3,95,527 from stamps, Rs. 2,33,222 from cesses, and Rs. 69,998 from income-tax.

Land revenue.

The collections of land revenue increased from Rs. 13,37,000 in 1880-81 to Rs. 14,29,000 in 1890-91, but fell again to Rs. 13,36,000 in 1900-01. In 1907-08 they amounted to Rs. 13,33,812 collected from 4,309 estates. Of the total number of estates, 3,973 with a current demand of Rs. 13,06,756 are permanently settled, 101 estates with a demand of Rs. 29,946 are temporarily settled, and 235 estates with a demand of Rs. 34,221 are held direct by Government. Of the estates borne on the

revenue roll of this district, 871, with an annual demand of about 5½ lakhs, lie wholly or partly in the Howrah district.

Excise.

Next to land revenue, the most important source of revenue is excise, the receipts from which increased from Rs. 2,90,434 in 1897-98 to Rs 4,50,795 in 1907-08, when they represented an expenditure of Rs. 4,013 per 10,000 of the population. Nearly half of this sum was obtained from the sale of country spirit, which realized Rs. 2,09,119. The manufacture and sale of country spirit are carried on under what is known as the contract-supply system, which was introduced in 1907-08. Under this system, the local manufacture of country spirit is prohibited, and contracts are made with firms of distillers for its supply. The contractors are forbidden to hold any retail licenses for the sale of the spirit. The spirit is brought by them to the various depôts, and is there blended and reduced to certain fixed strengths, at which alone it may be supplied to retail vendors, and sold by the latter to consumers.

According to the returns for 1907-08, there are 103 shops licensed for the retail sale of contract liquor, *i.e.*, one retail shop to every 11½ square miles and 10,187 persons; the average consumption of the liquor is 24 proof gallons per 1,000 of the population, and the incidence of taxation is annas 3·2 per head of the population. The income from this source would be more, but for the smuggling of illicit liquor from Chandernagore. In spite of this, the receipts from the license fees and duty on country spirit and *tāri* are larger than in any other district in the Burdwān Division, except Burdwān, representing Rs. 2,627 per 10,000, as compared with Rs. 1,616 for the Division and Rs. 2,298 for the whole of Bengal. The revenue from *pachwai* in the same year amounted to Rs. 8,663 and the license fees on imported liquors to Rs. 13,074; no other district in the Division had such large receipts from the latter source.

The receipts from opium and hemp drugs account for practically all the remainder of the excise revenue. The greater portion is derived from the duty and license fees on opium, which in 1907-08 brought in Rs. 1,14,493, representing Rs. 1,091 per 10,000 of the population. This proportion was higher than in any district in the Province outside Orissa and may be compared with the average of Rs. 656 per 10,000 returned for the Burdwān Division and Rs. 516 per 10,000 for the whole of Bengal. The consumption of *gānja*, *i.e.*, the unimpregnated dried flowering tops of the cultivated female hemp plant (*Cannabis indica*) is also considerable, the receipts being Rs. 55,197 in 1907-08. The total incidence of the revenue accruing from

hemp drugs was, however, only Rs. 575 for every 10,000 of the population, while the number of shops licensed to sell by retail was one to every 9,626 persons.

Special arrangements are made for the supply of opium to French Chandernagore. All the opium shops there are held by one farmer, who pays his fee to the French Government. Under a convention concluded between the British and the French Governments, the opium farmer is allowed to take his supplies from the Hooghly treasury up to a limit of 12 maunds per annum on payment of duty; the convention is for a period of 6 years with effect from 1st January 1907. The export of opium to French Chandernagore does not materially affect the incidence of duty and license fees, as the quantity actually issued to the farmer is, on an average, only 9 maunds 23 seers per annum. In 1907-08, out of a total clearance of 95 maunds 31 seers, only 9 maunds 36 seers were taken by the French farmer.

Stamps. The next important source of revenue is the sale of stamps, the receipts from which amounted to Rs. 3,95,527 in 1907-08, as compared with Rs. 4,74,528 in 1897-98. The sale of judicial stamps alone realized Rs. 3,34,091, as compared with Rs. 3,94,729 in 1897-98, while the receipts from non-judicial stamps were Rs. 61,436 and Rs 79,799, respectively. Court-fee stamps among judicial stamps, and impressed stamps among non-judicial stamps, account for nearly the whole of the revenue under this head.

Cesses. Road and public works cesses are, as usual, levied at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee; the figures given below include those for Howrah, as the accounts for the two districts have not been separated. In 1907-08 the collections amounted to Rs. 2,33,222, the current demand being Rs. 2,38,462, of which Rs 1,86,961 were payable by 7,953 revenue-paying estates, while Rs. 11,789 were due from 536 revenue-free estates, Rs. 38,377 from 12,601 rent-free lands, and Rs. 1,335 from 199 *hāts* and fairs. The number of rent-free lands is greater than in any district in Bengal except the 24-Parganas; the amounts due from them are generally small, and have frequently to be realized by certificate procedure. In 1907-08 no less than 10,983 certificates had to be issued; this was the largest number issued in any district in the Province, and exceeded the total number of certificates issued in the other four districts of the Burdwān Division.

The number of estates assessed to cesses is 21,289, and the number of recorded shareholders is 27,685. There are 20,625 tenures assessed to cesses with 20,845 shareholders; and there are thus nearly as many tenures assessed to cesses as there are

estates. The total demand of cesses (Rs. 3,31,111) is equal to nearly a quarter of the demand of land revenue (Rs 13,96,350).

Income-tax.

In 1897-98 the income-tax yielded Rs. 50,417 paid by 1,988 assessees, and in 1901-02 the amount derived from the tax had increased to Rs. 58,852 and the number of assessees to 2,422. At that time the minimum income assessable was Rs. 500, but this was raised to Rs. 1,000 in 1903, thereby affording relief to a number of petty traders, money-lenders and clerks. The number of assessees consequently fell in 1903 to Rs 1,139. In 1907-08 the tax brought in Rs. 69,998 paid by 1,311 assessees.

Registration.

There are 11 offices for the registration of assurances under Act III of 1877. At Hooghly (Chinsura) the District Sub-Registrar deals, as usual, with the documents presented there and assists the District Magistrate, who is *ex-officio* District Registrar, in supervising the proceedings of the Sub-Registrars in charge of other registration offices. In the five years 1895-99, the average number of documents registered annually was 26,752, and in the next quinquennium (1900-04) it was 28,418. In 1907 the number rose to 29,177, as shown in the marginal statement, which gives the salient statistics for that year. The increase is attributed chiefly to renewal of settlements which had been held over from previous years on account of heavy floods, and to the settlement of fallow and waste lands to meet the increased demand for jute and paddy cultivation.

NAME.	Documents registered.	Receipts.	Expenditure.
		Rs.	Rs.
Hooghly	2,240	7,507	6,924
Arāmbāgh ...	3,685	3,989	1,900
Dhaniākhāli ...	1,446	1,614	1,626
Goghāt	2,529	2,551	1,461
Ditto Joint (Shāmbazar)	1,569	1,687	1,604
Haripāl	2,678	2,729	2,039
Janāi	3,763	3,709	1,945
Khānākul	3,008	2,727	2,006
Kristanagar ...	2,109	2,401	1,662
Pāndua	2,217	2,470	1,947
Serampore ...	3,933	4,886	2,265
Total ...	29,177	36,270	25,379

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

This district with Howrah is under the jurisdiction of the District and Sessions Judge of Hooghly. The Additional District and Sessions Judge of the 24-Parganas is also Additional Judge for this district. The subordinate civil judicial officers are:—a Judge of the Small Cause Courts of Hooghly, Serampore and Howrah; a Sub-Judge and two Additional Sub-Judges; two Munsifs of Hooghly, three Munsifs of Serampore, a Munsif of Serampore and Uluberiā, and three Munsifs of Arāmbāgh.

Civil justice.

Criminal justice is administered by the District Magistrate and the various Magistrates subordinate to him. The sanctioned staff at the headquarters consists in addition to the District Magistrate, of four Deputy Magistrates of the first class and one Deputy Magistrate of the second or third class Besides these officers, one or two Sub-Deputy Magistrates with third class powers are generally posted to the head-quarters station. The Subdivisional Officers of Arāmbāgh and Serampore are almost invariably Magistrates of the first class, the former being assisted by a Sub-Deputy Magistrate vested with second or third class powers, and the latter by a Deputy Magistrate with first class powers. In addition to the stipendiary Magistrates, there are Benches of Honorary Magistrates at Chinsura, Hooghly, Serampore, Uttarpārā, Baidyabāti and Bhadreswar, and two Honorary Magistrates at Arāmbāgh.

For police purposes the district is divided into 13 thānas with 18 outposts as shown in the margin. The regular police force consisted in 1907 of the Superintendent and a Deputy Superintendent of Police, 8 Inspectors, 53 Sub-Inspectors, one Sergeant, 84 Head-Constables and 712 constables. The total strength of the force was, therefore, 860 men, representing one policeman to every 1·3 square miles and to every 1,220 of the population. The C Company of the Bengal Military Police is posted at Chinsura; it consisted in 1907 of one Subāhdār, one Jemadār, 4 Havildārs, 4 *naiks*, and 86 sepoys. The rural police for the watch and ward of villages in the interior consisted of 202 *dafadārs* and 2,694 *chaukīdārs*, representing one *chaukīdār* to every 390 inhabitants. The new *panchāyat* system has been introduced throughout the district, except in two thānas of the Serampore subdivision, viz , Chanditalā and Kristanagar ; under this system presidents of *panchāyats* are vested with the powers of a

Subdivision.	Thana.	Outpost.
Hooghly	Hooghly	Pipulpati Town. Shāhganj ,, Kharuabazar ,, Chandernagore ,, Magrā (Ind.)
	Balāgarh	......
	Pānduā	......
	Dhaniākhāli	Dādpur (Ind.)
	Polbā	......
Serampore	Serampore	Tāntipārā Town. Chātrā ,, Māhesh ,, Konnagar ,, Uttarpārā (Ind.) Baidyabāti. Sheorāphuli. Telinipārā. Bhadreswar (Ind.)
	Haripāl	Tārakeswar (Ind.)
	Singur	......
	Kristanagar	......
	Chanditalā	......
Arāmbāgh	Arāmbāgh	Pursurā (Ind.)
	Goghāt	Badanganj (Ind.)
	Khānākul	......

Magistrate of the third class under certain sections of the Criminal Procedure Code.

There is a district jail at Hooghly and a subsidiary jail at each of the outlying subdivisional head-quarters, viz., Arāmbāgh and Serampore. The sub-jail at Arāmbāgh has accommodation for 15 prisoners, viz., 12 male convicts and 3 female convicts, and that at Serampore for 28 (22 males and 6 females) under-trial prisoners; convicts sentenced to imprisonment of more than two weeks are transferred to Hooghly. The district jail has, according to the returns for 1908, accommodation for 465 prisoners, viz., barracks for 358 male convicts, 23 female convicts, 14 under-trial prisoners, and 8 civil prisoners; there are also cells for 6 male convicts and a hospital with beds for 56 patients. The chief jail industries are oil-pressing and the manufacture of coir mats and *daris*. JAILS.

CHAPTER XV.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

DISTRICT BOARD. THE riparian strip on the west bank of the Hooghly from Tribeni to the Bally Khâl is an urban tract containing no less than seven municipalities (exclusive of French Chandernagore), and there is also a municipality at Arāmbāgh. The rest of the district is rural in character, and the administration of its local affairs is controlled by the District Board. This Board has 27 members, of whom eleven are nominated, ten are elected, and six are *ex-officio* members, including the District Magistrate, who is its Chairman. According to the returns for 1907-08, the land-holding classes predominate among the members, representing 37 per cent. of the total number, while pleaders account for 29·6 per cent.

Income. The income of the District Board fluctuates considerably from year to year; but the average of the ten years from 1892-93 to 1901-02 was Rs. 1,80,944, and the average of the five years from 1904-05 to 1908-09 was Rs. 2,03,231. In 1907-08, exclusive of the opening balance (Rs. 97,872), the receipts aggregated Rs. 2,10,510, of which Rs. 97,012 were realized from road cess, the total incidence of taxation per head of the population averaging Re. 1-8. Among other items in the receipts were Rs. 7,271 from pounds, Rs. 22,814 from miscellaneous sources, Rs. 5,918 from ferries, and Rs. 28,107 contributed by Government. The receipts from road cess, which form the principal source of income, averaged Rs. 82,015 during the ten years ending in 1901-02. A revision of the assessment was completed in 1906-07, and the receipts consequently rose to Rs. 97,012 in 1907-08 and to Rs. 1,05,720 in 1908-09. Receipts from the leases of pounds are, on the whole, declining, falling from Rs 8,724 in 1892-93 to Rs. 7,271 in 1907-08. The amount obtained from ferries and tolls fluctuates, being, for example, Rs. 4,449 in 1902-03 and Rs. 6,461 in 1905-06. Part of the miscellaneous receipts is derived from recoveries on account of the cost of collecting arrear cesses, and part from the share of the profits paid to the District Board by the Howrah-Shiakhālā Light Railway. The Government contributions also vary considerably from year to year.

The income from that source consists of (1) the amount assigned to establish an equilibrium between the income and the expenditure transferred to the Board from the Provincial accounts, and (2) sums allotted for improvement of roads in Government estates.

Expenditure.

During the decade ending in 1901-02, the average annual expenditure of the District Board was Rs. 1,79,165, and during the quinquennium ending in 1908-09 it was Rs. 1,97,220. The chief items of expenditure are establishment, education, medical and civil works, the amounts spent in 1907-08 being Rs. 9,015 Rs. 37,853, Rs. 9,463, and Rs 1,18,630, respectively Civil works account for the largest disbursements, including as they do expenditure on new buildings and repairs of old buildings, the construction of new roads and the maintenance of old ones, the excavation and repair of tanks and wells, arboriculture, establishment, tools and plant, etc. In the quinquennium ending in 1907-08 the total annual expenditure under this head averaged Rs. 1,13,580. In 1907-08 the District Board had under its charge 78¾ miles of metalled roads and 428 miles of unmetalled roads, besides village roads having a total length of 588 miles; the average cost of repairs in that year was Rs. 446, Rs. 45 and Rs. 15 per mile, respectively.

After civil works, education entails the heaviest charge on the Board, including the cost of inspection, maintenance of Middle schools, grants-in-aid especially to Primary schools, and scholarships. The expenditure on these objects is, however, met from the sums transferred from Provincial revenues; and since the transfer (in 1906) of the control over Sub-Inspectors of schools from the Board to the Education Department, the charges under the sub-head "Inspection" have been reduced by 60 per cent. In 1907-08 the Board employed 12 inspecting pandits, maintained two Middle schools and aided one High school, 42 Middle schools, 105 Upper Primary schools, 866 Lower Primary schools and 21 other schools, such as *tols* and *maktabs*.

The medical work performed by the Board consists of maintaining or aiding dispensaries, deputing doctors to treat patients at markets and fairs, meeting the cost of vaccination, organizing measures to check epidemics of disease, and improving the sanitation of selected villages. In 1907-08 the Board maintained four dispensaries and aided five others, besides deputing a doctor to the *hāt* at Pānduā; while it spent, mainly through the Local Boards, Rs. 11,000 on improving the sanitation of villages. A Veterinary Inspector is also employed to treat sick cattle and to inspect affected villages, besides working as an Inspector under the Glanders and Farcy Act, in which capacity he inspects stables

and cattle sheds in the riparian municipalities. There is as yet no veterinary dispensary, but it is proposed to establish one. A contribution has been made during the last two years to the Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition held at Chinsura during the cold weather.

LOCAL BOARDS. Under the District Board there are three Local Boards and five Union Committees. Local Boards have been constituted for each of the three subdivisions, viz., Hooghly (Sadar), Serampore, and Arāmbāgh, and consist of 15, 15 and 9 members, respectively. In the Hooghly Local Board five members are nominated and ten are elected; in the Serampore Local Board four are nominated, ten are elected and one is an *ex-officio* member; the Arāmbāgh Local Board has one *ex-officio* and eight nominated members The Local Boards here, as elsewhere, have only a f w unimportant functions to discharge, being in charge of pounds and expending the sums allotted by the District Board for village roads and the improvement of village sanitation.

UNION COMMITTEES. The formation of Union Committees was the result of an attempt to provide for the improvement of village sanitation in smaller areas. Committees for Haripāl, Chandītalā and Bāli (Dīwānganj) were constituted on 1st July 1895; while the Panduā and Balāgarh Committees were formed a little later, viz., on 3rd and 8th December 1895, respectively. The marginal table shows the area and population of each of these unions. The income of the committees is derived partly from the receipts for pounds and partly from small contributions made by the District Board, the maximum not exceeding Rs. 400 a year each.

	Area in square miles.	Population.
Balāgarh ...	30	12,370
Bāli ...	10	9,473
Chandītalā ...	2	16,171
Haripāl ...	2	9,781
Pānduā ...	6	8,477

MUNICIPALITIES. There is a large urban population along the west bank of the river Hooghly, in the narrow strip extending from Bally Khāl to Tribeni. Hooghly contains the largest number of municipalities of all the districts in Bengal except the 24-Parganas. This riparian strip contains no less than 7 municipalities, viz., beginning from the south, Uttarpārā, Kotrang, Serampore, Baidyabāti, Bhadreswar, and then, on the north of French Chandernagore, Hooghly-Chinsura and Bānsberiā; while there is only one municipality in the interior, viz., at Arāmbāgh. The elective system is in force in all the riparian municipalities, two-thirds of the members being elected; but in Arāmbāgh all the members are nominated. The bulk of the municipal income is derived from rates on holdings, except in Bānsberiā, Arāmbāgh and one ward of Bhadreswar, where they are replaced by a tax on

persons. Latrine and conservancy fees are not levied in Bānsberiā and in a portion of Kotrang, but in the other municipalities they form the second largest source of income. A fair amount is also obtained in all the municipalities from taxes on animals and vehicles, taxes on professions and trades, pound receipts and fines under the Municipal Act, while ferries yield a considerable sum in the Hooghly, Baidyabāti, Serampore and Uttarpārā municipalities. The average incidence of taxation per head of the population in 1907-08 was highest in Uttarpārā, viz., Rs. 2-4-1 (the highest in the Division except Howrah) and was lowest in Arāmbāgh, viz, annas 10-1.

Hooghly-Chinsurā. The first attempt at municipal administration in Hooghly was made in the beginning of the last century under Regulation XXII of 1816, which contained provisions for conservancy, lighting and other urban requirements. In a Minute dated May 1823, granting the surplus town duties for the improvement of the town, the Governor-General in Council directed that they should be expended in "filling up hollows, stagnant pools and useless ditches, in the construction of *pucca* drains and bridges, the opening up and widening of the public roads, and in other minor improvements." A Local Committee under the control of the District Magistrate was formed, the road near the Collector's cutcherry was widened, several roads were metalled with brick, the fine casuarina trees which may still be seen along the roads were planted, several tanks were excavated, scavenging carts were brought and a staff of scavengers employed. Owing to financial stringency, the Government withdrew the grant in 1829 and dissolved the committee, transferring its functions to the Magistrate.

On 5th June 1840 a public meeting of the inhabitants was held at Hooghly, at which a committee was appointed to take into consideration measures for the municipal management of the towns of Chinsura, Hooghly and Chandernagore. The committee, which consisted of nine members (three from each town), requested the Magistrate to make over to them the full control of the conservancy and *chaukīdāri* establishments, but this the Magistrate could not legally do. At length, after a year's correspondence, the committee asked the Magistrate to move the Government to define its duties, powers and responsibilities; and the outcome of this request was the passing of Act X of 1842. This, the first purely municipal law in Bengal, did not, however, get into fair working order till 1846.*

* Toynbee, *Sketch of the Administration of Hooghly*, pp. 123-27.

Hooghly-Chinsura was constituted a regular municipality in 1865, and is now governed by the Bengal Municipal Act III of 1884 (B. C.) as amended. The municipality has an area of about six square miles and is divided into six wards, the rate-payers numbering 7,346 or 25 per cent. of the population. The Municipal Board consists of 18 Commissioners, of whom 12 are elected, 4 are nominated and 2 are *ex-officio* members. The average annual income of the municipality during the quinquennia ending in 1899-1900 and 1904-05 were Rs 49,197 and Rs. 58,147, respectively; while the average annual expenditure during those periods amounted to Rs. 46,476 and 55,474. In 1907-08 the total income was Rs. 56,071, the incidence of taxation per head of the population being Re. 1-13-5. The chief sources of income are a rate levied at 7½ per cent. on the annual value of holdings, which realized Rs. 29,559, and conservancy fees (Rs. 15,603) In the same year the expenditure amounted to Rs 56,460, the chief disbursements being on conservancy (51·3 per cent.) and public works (16·9 per cent.). A proposal for the supply of filtered water to the town is under consideration.

Serampore. Serampore is the most important municipality in the district, having both the largest population and the greatest income. Its local administration can be traced back to 1845-46, when the inhabitants held a meeting and asked for the introduction of Act X of 1842. It was constituted a regular municipality in 1865, and in 1873 was granted the right of electing Commissioners, being the first mofussil municipality to receive that privilege. It has an area of about 3½ square miles and is divided into four wards; there are 7,031 rate-payers forming 15·8 per cent. of the population. The Committee consists of 18 members, of whom twelve are elected and six are nominated. During the quinquennia ending in 1899-1900 and 1904-05, its annual income averaged Rs. 57,541 and Rs. 60,634, respectively, while the annual expenditure averaged Rs. 52,779 and Rs. 57,105, respectively. In 1907-08 the income aggregated Rs. 65,899, the incidence of taxation per head being Re. 1-4-3, while the expenditure was Rs. 76,265. The main sources of income are (1) a rate assessed at 7½ per cent. on the annual value of holdings, which brought in Rs. 31,348, and (2) latrine fees at rates ranging from annas 12 to Rs. 4½ per cent. on the annual value of holdings, which amounted to Rs. 16,070. The municipality is slightly indebted, having borrowed Rs. 30,000 from Government for drainage works in 1891, of which Rs. 9,054 remained unpaid at the end of 1907-08. A proposal for supplying filtered water from the Howrah waterworks, the intake of which

from the Hooghly river lies within this municipality, has been sanctioned, and work is in progress.

Arāmbāgh was constituted a municipality on 1st January 1886 its old name, Jahānābād, was changed to Arāmbāgh in 1900 in order to avoid confusion with the town of the same name in the Gayā district. It is the most rural of all the municipalities in this district, consisting of a group of 17 villages, spread over 3 square miles. The rate-payers number 1,750 or 21·1 per cent. of the total population. The elective system is not in force, and of the 10 members serving on the Committee, two serve *ex-officio* and eight are nominated, the Subdivisional Officer being the Chairman. The annual income averaged Rs. 5,309 in the five years ending in 1899-1900 and Rs. 6,454 in the subsequent five years. In 1907-08 the total income amounted to Rs. 8,066, the incidence of taxation per head being annas 10-1—the lowest in the district. The main sources of income are a tax on persons assessed at ¾ (12 annas) per cent. according to their circumstances and property, which yielded Rs. 3,224, and conservancy fees (Rs. 1,114). The expenditure in the same year amounted to Rs. 7,341. Arāmbāgh.

Uttarpārā, the southernmost and smallest of the municipal towns along the Hooghly, was made a municipality in 1865. It has an area of 1½ square miles and is divided into four wards with 1,350 rate-payers, representing 19·1 per cent. of the population. The Municipal Committee consists of 12 members, viz., four nominated and eight elected. The annual income averaged Rs. 13,675 and Rs. 14,770, respectively, in the quinquennia ending in 1899-1900 and 1904-05. In 1907-08 it was Rs. 16,567, chiefly derived from a rate on houses and lands assessed at the rate of 7½ per cent., and from latrine fees levied at the rate of 4½ per cent. on the probable letting value of holdings. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 14,282, and the incidence of taxation per head was the highest in the district, viz., Rs. 2-4-1. Uttarpārā.

Kotrang, immediately north of Uttarpārā, was constituted a municipality in 1869. It covers an area of 2 square miles and is divided into two wards, the rate-payers numbering 1,275 or 21·4 per cent. of the population. Of the nine Municipal Commissioners, three are nominated and six are elected. In the quinquennium ending in 1899-1900, and in the subsequent quinquennium (1900-01 to 1904-05), the average annual income was Rs. 4,276 and Rs. 5,133, respectively. In 1907-08 the receipts were Rs. 7,588, chiefly derived from a tax on holdings levied at the rate of 6¼ per cent. on their annual value and from a tax on Kotrang.

professions and trades, the incidence of taxation being Re. 1·4 per head. Conservancy or latrine fees have been levied in some parts of the municipality since 1908. This municipality has the smallest population and the least income of the municipalities in the district.

Baidyabāti. Baidyabāti, lying immediately north of Serampore, was constituted a municipality in 1869. It has an area of 5¼ square miles and is divided into four wards; the rate-payers number 3,955 and form 23 per cent of the total population. Of the twelve Commissioners, eight are elected and four are nominated. During the quinquennia ending in 1899-1900 and 1904-05, the annual income averaged Rs. 20,462 and Rs. 22,120, respectively. In 1907-08 the income aggregated Rs. 25,083, the incidence of taxation per head being Rs. 1-4-4, while the expenditure was Rs. 25,066. The bulk of the receipts is derived from a tax on houses and lands at the rate of 6 per cent. on their annual value (introduced in the second quarter of 1907-08), a tax on animals and vehicles, and latrine fees at the rate of 6¼ per cent. on the annual value of holdings. The amount derived from the tax on animals and vehicles is very considerable owing to the fact that the important *hāt* of Sheorāphuli is held within municipal limits; this tax yielded Rs. 5,249 in 1907-08. This municipality has a small reserve fund, Rs. 2,500 being invested in the 3½ per cent. loan of 1854-55.

Bhadreswar. Bhadreswar lies between Baidyabāti (on the south) and French Chandernagore (on the north). It was formed into a municipality in 1869 and has an area of about 3 square miles, divided into four wards. The rate-payers number 2,417 or 15·9 per cent. of the population; this small percentage is due, as in the case of Serampore, to the presence of a large number of mill hands who do not pay rates. The Municipal Committee consists of 12 members, of whom eight are elected and four are nominated. The average annual income in the quinquennia ending in 1899-1900 and 1904-05 was Rs. 11,805 and Rs. 16,556, respectively. In 1907-08 the receipts amounted to Rs. 20,709, the incidence of taxation per head being Re. 1-2-1. In three wards, Bhadreswar, Gaurhāti and Telinipārā, there is a rate on holdings at 6¼ per cent. of their annual value, and in the fourth ward of Mānkundu there is a tax on persons, for which there is no fixed rate, but which is generally 7 per cent. on the annual income of the rate-payers. Latrine fees also have no fixed rate, but are generally assessed at the rate of Rs. 4-11 per cent. on the annual value of domestic holdings and of Rs. 9-6 on the annual rent of cooly huts. In 1907-08 the expenditure aggregated Rs. 21,407, the bulk being

spent on conservancy and public works Altogether Rs. 30,000 are invested in 3½ per cent. Government paper.

Bānsberiā. Bānsberiā, the most northerly of the municipal towns, was constituted a municipality in 1869. It has an area of 6¾ square miles and is divided into four wards, with 1,499 rate-payers or 23·1 per cent. of the population. Of the nine Municipal Commissioners, six are elected and three nominated. The annual income averaged Rs. 6,722 and Rs. 8,082, respectively, during the two quinquennia 1895-96 to 1899-1900 and 1900-01 to 1904-05. In 1907-08 it was Rs. 8,487, the incidence of taxation per head being annas 12-1, while the expenditure was Rs. 9,700. The main sources of income are (1) a tax on persons at 1⅛ per cent. on their annual income, and (2) receipts from burning *ghāts*. The income under the latter head is considerable owing to the sanctity which attaches to cremation on the bank of the Bhāgīrathī at Tribenī.

CHAPTER XVI.

EDUCATION.

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION. A fair idea of the extent to which education is diffused may be obtained from the figures compiled during the census of 1901, at which all persons able to read and write were returned as literate. According to this test, 197 out of every 1,000 males are literate in this district—a proportion exceeded only in the districts of Howrah, Midnapore and the 24-Parganas, and in Calcutta—while the ratio in the case of females is 14 per mille, the highest returned by any district in Bengal. As regards knowledge of English, the ratio in the case of males (3·5 per mille) is the highest in the Province outside Calcutta and Howrah, where conditions are exceptional owing to the number of Europeans resident in those two cities.

The largest number of literates is found in thānas Hooghly and Serampore, where they represent 20 and 16 per cent., respectively, of the total population; out of 18,842 persons able to read and write English in the whole district, nearly half (9,276) are inhabitants of these two thānas. Balāgarh thāna is the least advanced, only 5 per cent. of its population being literate, and Goghāt thāna has the smallest proportion of persons knowing English. The reasons for these differences are obvious. The Hooghly and Serampore thānas contain all the riparian municipalities with a progressive population and large industrial works. Balāgarh and Goghāt are out-of-the-way thānas with few roads, little trade, and a population consisting mostly of low castes, such as Bāgdis and Kaibarttas. The subdivisions show little difference in the percentage of literates, the figures for Serampore being 11 per cent., Arāmbāgh 10·4 per cent., and Hooghly 8·9 per cent.

According to the returns compiled by the Educational Department, nearly two-thirds (63·5 per cent.) of the boys of school-going age attended schools of various kinds in 1893-94, but a decline then set in. In 1900-01 the lowest level was reached with 51·9 per cent., but since then the ratio has risen slowly until in 1908-09 it was 60·2 per cent. The number of educational

institutions, exclusive of colleges, also fell from 1,768 in 1893-94 to 1,319 in 1900-01, and then rose slowly to 1,536 in 1908-09. The decrease is due mainly to the Lower Primary schools, the number of which fell from 1,402 in 1893-94 to 1,001 in 1900-01. After this the decline was arrested, the number rising in 1908 09 to 1,165, including 159 girls' schools and 76 night schools; there was thus a decrease of 237 schools in a decade and a half, while the attendance fell by 2,368. On the other hand, this loss was partly compensated by the increase of Upper Primary schools from 108 to 126 and of their pupils from 4,000 to 6,110.

The decrease in the number of schools and scholars is due to a variety of causes A number of Lower Primary schools have disappeared owing to inefficiency and their incapacity to come up to departmental standards, but the main cause must be sought elsewhere. Owing to the continued unhealthiness of the district, a considerable number of the better educated classes have migrated with their families to Calcutta and other places. At the same time, up-country people have migrated into the riparian municipalities in search of employment in the mills and elsewhere, while a body of aboriginals, Santāls, Oraons, etc., have found their way into the mofussil. The necessary consequence is that a portion of the old residents, mostly literates, have left the district, while a larger number of immigrants, mostly adults and illiterates, have come to live in it. In this way the ratio of literacy and of boys attending the schools has been reduced, necessitating the closure of a certain number of Primary and other schools.

On the other hand, progress is noticeable in the education of girls, the ratio of female literates rising from 4 per mille in 1881 to 9 in 1891 and to 14 in 1901. The educational returns also show that the number of girls at school represented 6·2 per cent. of the number of girls of school-going age in 1908-09 as against 4·4 per cent. in 1893-94. Some progress is further shown by the Muhammadans, the number of such pupils having increased from 7,509 to 8,476 in the same period.

The bulk of the secondary schools lie in the Serampore subdivision, where the population has increased, and trade and manufactures thrive. The Sadar subdivision has fewer schools of this class, probably because the interior is severely affected by malaria. The inland subdivision of Arāmbāgh is the least advanced, having only three High English schools, whereas the Serampore subdivision contains 16 such schools. These schools are naturally located in the municipalities and in villages in which the middle classes bulk largely, *e.g.*, those lying along the banks of the

rivers and their main branches, such as the Saraswatī, the Kānā Dāmodar, the Kausikī, the Kānā Dwārakeswar, etc.

INSPECTING STAFF. The inspecting staff consists of one Deputy Inspector, 3 additional Deputy Inspectors, 10 Sub-Inspectors and 3 Assistant Sub-Inspectors, besides 12 Guru Instructors employed by the District Board.

COLLEGES. Hooghly. There are two colleges in this district, the Hooghly College and the Uttarpārā College. The former, which is located in Chinsura, was opened on 1st August 1836, according to a stone tablet in the college, but was really first established in its present building some time between March and May of the following year. This fine building, which had been built by M. Perron, the general of Scindia, about 1805, was purchased from Jagamohan Seal, who had bought it in execution of a decree against Prānkissen Hāldār. The college was originally maintained from the Mohsin Fund, so called because it owed its creation to a pious Musalmān named Muhammad Mohsin. The latter inherited the large property of his step-sister, the widow of Salāh-ud-din, *Faujdār* of Hooghly, and being heirless executed on 30th April, 1806, a trust deed by which he appointed two trustees to manage the property and to spend the proceeds in the service of God and the maintenance of the Imāmbārā. After his death, in 1813, complaints of mismanagement and embezzlement were made against the *mutwalis*; and in 1817 the Board of Revenue stepped in and took charge of the property, appointing a Muhammadan gentleman as manager of the property and the Imāmbārā. The dismissed trustees instituted a suit, which lasted till 1835. In the meantime the Government let out the Saiyadpur estate in *patnī*, and eventually the amount paid as *salāmī* with the accumulated interest aggregated Rs. 8,61,000. The suit of the trustees, which was taken up to the Privy Council, having been finally dismissed, the college was established from this surplus and a one-ninth share of the trust income. The income made available for the maintenance of the college gradually rose to Rs. 57,000 per annum, but objections were raised to the appropriation of this fund to a college open to members of all communities. Accordingly, the Government of Bengal, by a Resolution dated 29th July 1873, set apart the fund for the exclusive promotion of education among Muhammadans in Bengal, and made the Hooghly College a Government institution to be maintained from general revenues.

The college once ranked next in importance to the Presidency College, and among its *alumni* are men like the late Mr. Justice Dwārkā Nāth Mitra and Mr. Amir Ali. The Finance Committee of 1886 advocated its abolition, and in 1891 it was decided that,

if possible, the college should be handed over to local control. This step was not taken, but it was agreed that in future the staff should consist entirely of men recruited in India. This decision was carried into effect in 1896. In 1899 a memorial signed by a large number of zamindārs, retired Government servants, High Court pleaders and former pupils, was submitted to Government requesting that some at least of the staff of the college might be members of the Indian Educational Service. As a result of this memorial, Sir John Woodburn, the then Lieutenant-Governor, ordered that arrangements should, if possible, be made by which the services of a member of the Indian Educational Service or a European officer with the degree of an English University should be made available for the post of Principal.

The college consists of two departments, an English and an Arabic, the former being open to all students who have passed the University Entrance Examination. Under the old regulations of the University, it provided for education up to the M. A. examination. Under the new regulations, it has arranged to teach certain specified subjects of the Intermediate examination in Arts and Science, and provision has been made for teaching English, Sanskrit, Persian, History, Mathematics and Vernacular composition up to the B. A. standard. The administration of the college is entrusted to a governing body with the Commissioner as President and the Principal as Secretary. The fees are Rs. 6 a month, but Muhammadans pay only half that sum, the balance being met from the Mohsin Fund. A collegiate school and a *madrasa* are attached to the college, the latter of which is maintained from the Mohsin Fund; there are a hostel and mess for Muhammadans, and another hostel and mess for Hindus. The college has a valuable library of old books. The number of students on its rolls on the 31st March 1909 was 117.

The Uttarpārā College is the outcome of the public spirit of the late Babu Jayakrishna Mukherji and his son Rājā Piyāri Mohan Mukherji. In 1846 Jayakrishna Mukherji opened a Government school at Uttarpārā, which was endowed with property belonging to himself and his brother Bābu Rājkrishna Mukherji, yielding an annual income of Rs. 1,200. After long continued efforts to have the school raised to the status of a college, he submitted a proposal to Government, in 1887, for the establishment of an aided college in connection with the Government school. The Government consented to this proposal, provided that the school was taken off its hands, to which he agreed. The terms of the transfer were finally settled with Rājā Piyāri Mohan Mukherji

Uttarpārā.

in March 1889; and the college and the collegiate school were then placed under a governing board, consisting of the Collector as President and several of the Mukherjis as representatives of the family. In 1897, the Government resumed charge of the school, after which the college was maintained by Rājā Piyari Mohan Mukherji till 1906. In the following year the latter made over an endowement of Rs. 1,200 a year to the college, the management of which was then vested in an enlarged governing body, with the Principal as Secretary. The college teaches up to the Intermediate Examination in Arts and is located in a substantial two-storeyed building situated on the river bank. A hostel is attached to it. There were 32 students on the rolls on the 31st March 1909.

Serampore.

No account of collegiate education in Hooghly would be complete without a reference to the late Serampore College, which owed its establishment to the three Baptist missionaries, William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward. In 1817 they bought a piece of ground adjoining the mission premises, and on 15th July 1818 issued a prospectus of the proposed college. The scheme received the hearty approval and support of the Governor-General and of the Danish Governor of Serampore; and Ward was deputed to make collections in England for its support. The building, however, an Ionic structure, which cost about £15,000, was built entirely from funds contributed by the missionaries themselves. The sources from which this money came were mainly the salary that Carey received as Professor in the Government College of Fort William, the income from the school established by Dr. and Mrs Marshman, and the profits of the press set up by Ward.

In 1827, the College was granted a charter by the then King of Denmark, Frederic VI; and when Serampore was transferred to the British in 1845, the treaty of purchase contained a clause reserving all the rights and immunities granted to the college by the Danish King.

The original design of the institution was "to promote piety and learning, particularly among the native Christian population of India." For some years Sanskrit and the vernaculars were the medium of instruction, though European science was taught and English was studied as a special subject. Serampore thus became a centre of Oriental as distinct from English education. From the outset Carey insisted that theological students, while they should above all "be imbued with a knowledge of the Scriptures and of Christian doctrine," should be "taught Sanskrit in the most efficient manner, and be made as fully acquainted

with the philosophic doctrines which form the soul of the Buddhist and Puranic systems, as are the learned in India themselves." But by 1824 English began to assert its supremacy as the medium of education and Sanskrit slowly receded into the background.

The Serampore missionaries were already old men when they established the college, and they passed away before they could realize their ideals or get sufficient endowment and support to justify their organizing it on university lines. For the next fifty years, however, the college, at first independently and then in affiliation with Calcutta University, gave a sound general and Christian education to a large body of Hindu, Eurasian and native Christian youths, and was admittedly one of the most successful institutions of the kind in India. In 1883, in consequence of a change of policy on the part of the Committee in England, the college, and practically also the school classes, were closed to non-Christians. For the past quarter of a century the college has maintained a boarding-school for Christian boys and normal and theological classes for Christian teachers and preachers, retaining its connection with the University only as a high school.

In 1900 Dr. Howells (at that time Professor in the Baptist Mission Society Theological Seminary, Cuttack) began a movement for the reorganization of the College on the lines laid down by its founders. Dr. Howells wrote a series of papers and pamphlets on theological and Christian education in India, and brought the subject up for discussion before various Indian missionary conferences, Baptist and interdenominational. His proposals were sympathetically discussed in the Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore, Poona and other interdenominational missionary conferences; and, while there was considerable difference of opinion in regard to details, practically all Indian missionaries sympathized with the main objects in view, viz., the bringing of the study of Christian theology into closer touch with general culture, and the securing of academic recognition of theological studies and effective co-operation in the production of theological and other Christian literature. The subject was further discussed at the Madras Decennial Conference of December 1902 and at important conferences of Baptists held at Serampore in July 1907 and in March 1908.

As an outcome of these discussions, a representative body of Baptists with the College Council have recently issued an appeal for £250,000 with which to transform the college into a Christian University. The main object is to reorganize the college into a

Theological University conferring its own divinity degrees, with a first grade College of Arts and Science in affiliation with the University of Calcutta and open to all students, lay and theological, Christian and non-Christian. The Trustees of the Arthington Fund have made a grant of £7,000 towards new land and buildings; and the Baptist Missionary Society has guaranteed to support one Native and four European professors.* Collegiate classes teaching up to the Intermediate have now (1911) been opened.

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

High English Schools.

In 1908-09 there were 32 High English schools, *i.e.*, schools teaching up to the Entrance or Matriculation standard of the University; and the total number of pupils studying in them was 5,370, representing an average of 168 for each school. In no other district in the Burdwān Division are there so many schools of this class or so many pupils at this stage of education. Three are Government schools, *viz.*, the Hooghly Collegiate school, the Hooghly Branch school with the Model school, and the Uttarpārā school. The Hooghly Branch school is the oldest of all the existing High schools, having been founded in 1834 by Mr. D. C. Smyth, then Judge of Hooghly: the funds for the building and other expenses were raised by subscriptions given by the principal zamindārs of the district.

No less than 17 High schools received aid from Government, the District Board or the Municipalities in 1908-09 (to the extent of Rs. 7,671 out of a total cost of Rs. 58,698), *viz.*, Arāmbāgh, Bāgāti, Baidyabāti, Balāgarh, Bhadreswar, Bhandārhāti, Bhāstārā, Chātrā, Chinsura Free Church, Dasgharā, Guptipārā, Ilchhobā, Mandalai, Janāi, Kaikalā, Konnagar, Serampore Union and Somrā. Of these, the Chinsura Free Church Institution (situated apposite the court barracks,) had the largest number of pupils (303) in that year and the largest grant (Rs. 960). Twelve schools are unaided, *viz*, Bihāri Lāl Free, Chandernagore Garhbāti, Chinsura Training Academy, Garalgāchhā, Gopālnagar Gyānadā Institution, Haripāl, Itāchanā, Mahānād Free Church, Sheakhālā, Sikandarpur K. P. Pāl's Institution, Singur and Serampore K. M. Shāhā's Free Institution. The Chinsura Training Academy with 424 boys on the rolls has a larger attendance than any other High school; but in the Entrance Examination of 1908 the Government schools were most successful, passing 50 students with four in the first division; the aided schools of

*The facts above stated have been taken from three pamphlets—"The Cradle of Modern Missions," "A Christian University for India" and "The Serampore Charter and other related documents and papers."

Serampore town, *viz.*, Konnagar, Chātrā and Serampore Union, did almost as well, passing 14 students, of whom nine were placed in the first division

In 1908-09 the Middle English schools numbered 55 and the Middle Vernacular schools 12 (as against 28 in 1893-94). The decline in Middle Vernacular schools is not peculiar to this district, and is largely due to the general desire of parents to have their children taught English. Of the 55 Middle English schools, two were managed by the District Board, 44 were aided by the District Board and the Municipalities, and nine were unaided; of the 12 Middle Vernacular schools, all but one were aided. Middle Schools.

For the elementary education of boys there were, in 1908-09, 126 Upper Primary schools and 930 Lower Primary schools, the number of pupils at which was 6,110 and 28,123, respectively, giving an average of 49 boys to an Upper Primary school and of 30 to a Lower Primary school. Of the Upper Primary schools, six (attached to the Guru Training schools) were maintained by Government, 119 were aided and only one was unaided. Of the Lower Primary schools, 818 received grants in-aid and 112 were unaided. The average cost of an Upper Primary school in the same year was Rs. 188 and of a Lower Primary school Rs. 78. Seven scholarships are allotted to boys on the results of the Upper Primary Examination and 28 scholarships on the results of the Lower Primary Examination Seventy-six night schools have been opened for the labouring classes, which were attended by 1,298 pupils; they are mostly conducted by the teachers of day schools. PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

In 1908-09 there were 159 female schools with 3,573 pupils (exclusive of boys), besides 959 girls reading in boys' schools and 320 reading in *muktabs*: in all, 4,852 females. Fourteen of these schools were unaided and 145 were aided, including two zanāna agencies in Hooghly town, one under a European and the other under a Muhammadan female teacher, and two Model Primary schools at Bainchi and Sheakhālā. The girls' schools are generally conducted by male teachers, except the zanāna agencies and some schools under missionary management; thirteen of the latter received grants-in-aid and five were unaided. FEMALE EDUCATION.

Under this head may be mentioned the Hitakārī Sabhā of Uttarpārā, which was founded in 1863 by the late Bābu Harihar Chatterji of that town, its chief objects being to educate the poor, to distribute medicines to the indigent sick, to support poor widows and orphans, to encourage female education by the award Uttarpārā Hitakārī Sabhā.

of scholarships to girls, and to ameliorate the social, moral and intellectual condition of the inhabitants of Uttarpārā and neighbouring places. The income of the Sabhā is derived from the subscriptions of the members, donations from others, Government grants, interest on Government securities and annuities from the estate of the late Bābu Piyāri Mohan Banerji. It holds annual examinations for girls in the Burdwān Division, issuing certificates to the successful candidates, and awarding prizes and scholarships.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION. An important technical institution has recently been started in the district, *viz.*, the Government Central School of Weaving at Serampore, the object of which is to teach improved methods of weaving on hand-looms. There are to be two classes of students to receive instruction here, *viz.*, (1) a higher class consisting of men of the Sibpur apprentice type, who will be trained to become teachers, manufacturers or assistants of manufacturers, and (2) a lower class consisting of weavers and their sons from Serampore and the neighbourhood.

In order to attract students Government has offered 20 scholarships of Rs. 15 each tenable for two years to the students of the higher class, and 20 scholarships of Rs. 6 and 20 more of Rs. 4 each tenable for four months to pupils in the lower class. The Hooghly District Board has also offered 10 scholarships of Rs. 6 each for local weavers. The school was opened in January 1909 under a European Principal, and the classes started with 6 free students, 17 students holding scholarships, and 10 teachers undergoing a course of training.

TRAINING SCHOOLS. With the exception of *madrasas*, which are referred to below, the only other public educational institutions calling for mention are the training schools for teachers. There is a first-grade training school at Hooghly, which had 105 pupils on the rolls on 31ts March 1909, and in the interior six Guru training schools have been started (two in each subdivision) with 69 *gurus* on the rolls.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS. The private institutions include Sanskrit *tols*, Musalmān *maktabs*, Korān schools, elementary schools not conforming to departmental standards, and schools having less than 10 pupils. In 1908-09 there were 48 private Sanskrit *tols* with 256 pupils, 29 Korān schools with 231 pupils, and 44 non-departmental schools with 914 pupils. The number of private *tols* and *maktabs* is declining, as they are gradually accepting departmental standards, and are thus being converted into public institutions.

MUHAMMADAN EDUCATION. In 1908-09 there were 8,476 Musalmān pupils at school, representing 62·5 per cent. of the number of Muhammadan boys of school-going age. In *maktabs* they learn the Korān and the

rudiments of Persian and Arabic; a more advanced education is given in four *madrasas*, which teach Persian, Arabic and Urdu, the standard laid down for the Calcutta Madrasa being followed as far as practicable. The *madrasa* attached to the Hooghly College is maintained from the Mohsin Fund, while three are under private management. The Sītāpur and Phurphurā *madrasas* have applied for recognition as upper grade schools.

Higher Sanskrit education is given in a number of recognized *tols*, which send up candidates for the Sanskrit First, Second and Title Examinations held annually under the supervision of managing committees with the Principal of the Calcutta Sanskrit College as Secretary. One *tol*, the Viswanāth Chatuspāthi at Chinsura, is managed by a committee, and is maintained from a fund left by its founder, the late Bābu Bhudev Mukherji. The other *tols* in this district are private, and are mostly found in old places, such as Tribenī (including Bānsberiā), Bhadreswar, Baidyābāti, Uttarpārā, Tārakeswar, Khānākul, Kristanagar, etc. As regards the nature of these *tols*, the following extracts are quoted from the Report of the late Pandit Mahesh Chandra Nyāyaratna, C.I.E., Principal of the Sanskrit College, who in 1891 inspected the *tols* of Bengal. "The word *tol* is a word of non-Sanskrit origin, and is in use only in Bengal, where *tols* are also called *chaupādi* or *chaubādi*, from Sanskrit *chatuspāthi*, a place for teaching the four Vedas. The *tol* is an institution of a peculiar character. It is a school of learning where pupils are not only taught free of charge, but are likewise lodged and boarded free. As the name *tol* is confined to Bengal, so is the practice of lodging and boarding pupils, as a rule, confined to this Province. The only departure in Bengal from this practice is to be found in the *tols* of Nadiā, where pupils till lately were almost universally not fed by their teachers. ***Tols.***

"A *tol* is generally located outside the limits of inhabited places, villages or towns. It consists of one or more long huts with mud or wicker walls and thatched roofs. Each hut is divided into compartments, the partitions, however, not reaching to the roof. These compartments, in which the students are quartered, are of small dimensions, generally about seven feet square, and raised banks of earth (*vedi*) within very often serve for bedsteads. The part of the compartment that is not occupied by the *vedi* is reserved for cooking and other purposes. All the pupils in a *tol*, however, do not cook for themselves. Some get their meals free at the house of the teacher. The pupils who cook their food receive free gifts of rice and other eatables from their teacher. Pupils not belonging to the same class of Brāhmans as the teacher always

cook for themselves. All the pupils in a *tol* are not free boarders. Some of the pupils may be local residents who attend the *tol* as day-scholars. Some pupils again who are not local residents may be freely boarded by local residents. Beginners or grammar pupils generally are the pupils who are so boarded. In addition to the huts that furnish quarters to the students, there is a hut called *saraswatī-mandap*, open on one side and sheltered on the other three. It measures about 20 feet by 10 feet, and is the place where the teacher teaches his pupils. The teacher takes his seat here on a mat, and the pupils take theirs on separate mats before him, some on his right, some on his left, and some also facing him, if there is no more room on the right and the left.

"The work begins at about 7 o'clock in the morning, and continues to about noon. All the pupils being assembled together, the teacher begins with the least advanced and gradually passes on to the most advanced. The object of this arrangement is that the more advanced pupils may have the benefit of a revision by means of the lessons of the less advanced. Pupils are dismissed as they finish their lessons. If their day's work is not finished in the morning, the teacher and the pupils resume work at about 4 in the afternoon, and continue it till dusk. In the evening again pupils are allowed to bring their doubts and difficulties before the teacher for solution, and at this time the teacher also questions the beginners. There is very little of classification of students in a *tol*, each pupil, generally speaking, having his own lesson. Only in occasional instances have some two or three pupils the same lesson. Not more than one book is read by a pupil at a time, and the quantity of work done each day is but moderate. This makes it possible for a single teacher to teach each day a number of pupils, each with his separate lesson. The work done, though moderate in quantity, is done in a thorough style.

"At Tribenī, in the Hooghly district, long a famous seat of Sanskrit learning, such learning is now in decadence. Jagannāth Tarkapanchānan was a native of this place, and a long train of eminent Pandits before and after him are associated with the name of Tribeni. Its one *tol* now represents the "seven or eight" that existed in 1818, as stated by Mr. Ward (Adam's Report on Vernacular Education in Bengal and Behar, edited by Rev. J. Long, Calcutta, 1868, p 40). This solitary *tol* is taught by a learned Pandit, Ambikā Charan Vidyāratna, fifth in descent from Jagannāth Tarkapanchānan, and with his demise the traditional reputation of Tribenī as a seat of learning will have passed away. In the rest of the Hooghly district, things are no better than at Tribenī. Khānākul-Kristanagar, long noted as one of the most

eminent seats of learning in Bengal, has but four *tols* at present, none of them in a flourishing condition. Nor do its present Pandits enjoy the reputation that their predecessors did. Pashpur and Narit, which too had for numerous generations been places of Sanskrit learning, have now ceased to have a single *tol*. Bānsbariā with twelve or fourteen *tols*, Bhadreswar with its ten, and Gondalpārā with its ten in 1818 (all according to Mr Ward's enumeration as quoted on pages 40 and 41 of Adam's Report, Long's edition), have almost ceased to have any *tol*, there being only one good *tol* now at Bānsberia taught by Pandit Mahendranāth Tarkapanchānan, and another (a nominal one) at Bhadreswari".

The students mostly live with their parents or recognized guardians, and only a few whose homes are in the interior live in hostels and messes. There are two hostels in Chinsura attached to the Hooghly College, one Hindu and the other Musalmān, both of which are under Government management, while there are 12 messes under private management in Hooghly town and elsewhere. In 1908-09 the total number of boarders in hostels and messes was 380. MESSES AND HOSTELS.

Seven libraries are reported to be in existence in the district, of which that at Uttarpārā is the most important. It is located in a double-storeyed building, situated on the river bank, and contains a large number of valuable old books on India. This library was founded, in 1859, by the late Rājā Jayakrishna Mukherji and has an endowment consisting of landed property and Government securities; the fund is managed by five trustees. Among other libraries may be mentioned the Hooghly public library founded in 1853, and the Serampore public library established in 1871. LIBRARIES.

Two Bengali weekly papers are issued at Chinsura, viz., the *Education Gazette* founded by the late Bhudev Mukherji, which deals chiefly with educational and literary topics, and the Chinsura *Vārtāvaha*. Babu Akshay Kumar Sarkār, a well known Bengali author, for several years edited a Bengali weekly named *Sādhāranī*, which was published at Chinsura. NEWSPAPERS.

The Serampore missionaries were the first to cast type in the vernacular languages and to employ native compositors; and the earliest vernacular newspapers in Bengali were issued from this press at Serampore in 1818. In April of that year, John Clark Marshman, C.S.I., son of Dr. Marshman, issued the first monthly Bengali magazine, the *Dig-Darsan*, and next month issued the first weekly, the *Samāchār Darpan*. The *Friend of India* was also issued by him and his father in 1818 as a monthly, then in 1820 as a quarterly magazine, and next in 1835 as a weekly paper The

goodwill was purchased by Mr. Robert Knight in 1874, and it is now the daily paper known as the *Statesman.* "It was," writes Rājā Binaya Krishna Deb, "the Serampore missionaries who heralded the growth and development of the Vernacular Press. Not only was the first newspaper, *Samāchār Darpan*, started by them in 1818, but Bengali printing types and press were first successfully introduced. The late Rev. Lall Behary Dey writes *:—'The printing press brought from England by Mr. Ward was set up. A fount of Bengali type was cast through the assistance of a Bengali blacksmith named Panchānan, who had learnt to cut punches from Dr. Wilkins. On the 18th of March 1800, an ever-memorable day, Carey took an impression of the first page of the Gospel of St Matthew. The last page was printed on the 10th February, 1801. Then was the New Testament printed. Christian tracts followed in rapid succession.' According to Rainey,† the Bengali typography was introduced in 1778, and the first book, a grammar in Bengali characters, was printed at Hooghly; it was written by Mr. N. B. Halhead, an eminent Orientalist, whose patron was Warren Hastings. The Bengali types were first prepared by Charles Wilkins, then a Lieutenant of the Bengal Army, from whom Panchānan learnt this art.‡"

---

* The Bengal Magazine, February, 1875.

† Rainey's Topographical Sketch, etc.

‡ The Early History and Growth of Calcutta, 1905, pp. 222-4.

CHAPTER XVII.

GAZETTEER*.

Arāmbāgh.—Headquarters town of the subdivision of the same name, situated in 22° 53′ N. and 87° 47′ E. on the Dwārakeswar river. In 1911 it had a population of 8,048, as compared with 8,366 in 1891. The town contains the usual public offices found at a subdivisional headquarters—a munsif's court, sub-jail, police station, sub-registry office, dispensary, post office (but not a telegraph office), High English school, the offices of the Local Board and the Municipality, and a District Board bungalow. It is distinctly rural in appearance, the houses being mainly *kutcha* and most of the roads unmetalled, and it has no large trade or industry. It was formerly called Jahānābād, but the name was changed in 1900 to Arāmbāgh, to avoid confusion with the town of Jahānābād in the Gayā district. The name, which means the garden of ease, refers to a garden of the Miyāns, the most influential family in the place.

The town is touched by several important roads, including the Old Benares, Old Nāgpur and Arāmbāgh-Burdwān roads, but is difficult of access during the rains, being cut off by the floods of the Dāmodar and other rivers. At this time of the year the only practicable means of reaching the place is to go by a round-about way, viz., by the Arāmbāgh-Burdwān road. The quickest means of reaching the place in other seasons is to go by rail to Tārakeswar and thence by road, either riding or in a *pālki*. The distance from Tārakeswar to Arāmbāgh is 18 miles by the Old Benares Road *viâ* Chāpādāngā and 16 miles across country *viâ* Keshabpur. There is a Public Works Department bungalow at Chāpādāngā (5 miles from Tārakeswar) and a District Board bungalow at Māyāpur (12 miles from Tārakeswar and 6 miles from Arāmbāgh).

Arāmbāgh is an old place, which was of some importance owing to its situation on the Old Pādshāhi road from Burdwān to

* We desire to acknowledge our obligations to Lieut.-Col. D. G. Crawford, I.M.S., for his kindness in revising the draft.

Midnapore. In 1590 A.D., Mān Singh, then Governor of Bihār, intending to invade Orissa, marched *viâ* Burdwān to this place and cantoned his troops here, waiting till the end of the rains would enable him to take the field.* No old remains, however, have survived, presumably on account of the encroachments of the river. The ruins of two indigo factories can still be seen, one at Kālīpur west of the river and another at Pārul in the south-east. Near the latter, in the second mile of the road to Arandi, is a large tank, a quarter of a mile square, called Ranjit Rai's tank, about which the following story is told:†

"Ranjit Rai was a big zamīndār, called by courtesy a Rājā, who lived in a village named Garhbāri, on the north of the Old Benares road, about a mile east of Arāmbāgh. He was a devoted worshipper of the goddess Durgā, who on one occasion played the part of his daughter to show him favour. On the morning of the day of the Bārunī festival (thirteenth day of the moon in April), a *shānkhāri*, or dealer in conch-shell ornaments, while passing near the tank now known as Ranjit Rai's tank, felt thirsty, and went to the tank to get a drink of water. On reaching the *ghāt*, he saw a beautiful maiden bathing there. The maiden enquired who he was. On hearing that he was a *shānkhāri*, she asked whether he had a pair of *shānkhās*, or shell bracelets, which would suit her. He said that he had such a pair, but they were expensive. The girl then came out of the tank, and asked the man to put the bracelets on her wrists. He did so, and told her that their price was five rupees. The girl said that she had no money with her. but that, if the man would go to her father, Ranjit Rai, he would pay for the bracelets. She further told the *shānkhārì* to tell her father that he would find, in a niche in the room facing south, a small box with five rupees in it; and added that, if her father made any demur to paying, if the man returned to the *ghāt* and called for her, she would pay. The *shānkhāri* accordingly went to Ranjit Rai's house, told his story and asked for the five rupees.

"Ranjit Rai, it happened, had no daughter, and at first he thought of simply dismissing the man as a liar; on second thoughts he went to look for the box, and found it, with five rupees inside, in the place described. He then thought that some supernatural agency was at work, and went with the *shānkhāri* to the *ghāt* where the girl had been bathing. The *shānkhāri* called out for the girl whom he had seen, saying: 'Where are you, Oh beautiful maiden, who took a pair of *shānkhās* from me this morning?' In

* *Akbarnāma*, Elliot, Vol. VI, p. 86.

† D. G. Crawford, *Brief History of the Hooghly District*, pp. 68-69.

answer a pair of hands, wearing the new bracelets, were raised from the water in the centre of the tank. The Rājā threw himself on the ground and prayed to Durgā, and in the evening celebrated a great *pujā* at the tank. To this day the Bāruni or bathing festival is celebrated at Ranjit Rai's tank."

Arāmbāgh Subdivision.—Western subdivision of the district, lying between 22° 36′ and 23° 2′ north latitude, and between 87° 32′ and 88° 1′ east longitude, with an area of 406 square miles. It is roughly triangular in shape, with its base resting on the Dāmodar in the east. On the south-west it is bounded partly by the Rūpnārāyan and Dwārakeswar rivers and partly by the Ghātāl and Sadar subdivisions of Midnapore; and on the north-west it is bounded by the Bishnupur subdivision of Bānkurā and the Sadar subdivision of Burdwān. The westernmost part, which is included in thāna Goghāt, is undulating and has a comparatively high level; but the rest of the subdivision, which is bounded on the east by the Dāmodar, on the west by the Dwārakeswar, and on the south by the Rūpnārāyan, is low-lying and liable to the annual floods of the first two rivers, their branches and tributaries. In 1901 the subdivision had a population of 327,389 with 806 persons to the square mile. It is rural throughout, even its one town, Arāmbāgh, being practically non-urban. The present subdivision was formed in 1879 and used to be known as the Jahānābād subdivision.

Badanganj.—A village in thāna Goghāt of the Arāmbāgh subdivision, situated on the extreme western boundary of the district. It contains a police outpost, and is the centre of a considerable trade, chiefly in timber and tusser silk, which is woven locally. There is an old *sarai* here with an inscription dated 1125 H. (1713 A.D.)

Baidyabāti (*Baidya*, physician, and *bāti*, place) —A town on the west bank of the river Hooghly, situated in 22° 47′N. and 88° 20′E. At the census of 1911 its population was returned at 20,516, or 3,342 more than in 1901. According to the census figures, the male population is in considerable excess, probably owing to the number of mill-hands. Baidyabāti was constituted a municipality in 1869, and, besides the Municipal office, contains two town outposts subordinate to the Serampore police station, one at Baidyabāti and the other at Sheorāphuli. There are also a small dispensary for out-patients, a High English school, two Sanskrit *tols* teaching *Smriti* (law), two stations of the East Indian Railway, viz , Sheorāphuli and Baidyabāti, the former of which is a junction for the Tārakeswar line, and a large jute mill at Chāmpdāni. The town extends chiefly

along the river bank, North Chātrā being on the south, while the rest of Chātrā is included in the Serampore Municipality. Above Chātrā is Sheorāphuli, which is a great market for jute and vegetables: in fact, the largest in Western Bengal; next, separated by the Baidyabāti Khāl, which drains the Dānkuni marshes and falls into the Hooghly, is Baidyabāti proper; and lastly, to the east of it, is Chāmpdāni with a large *basti* of mill-hands. The branch Grand Trunk Road, which starts at Sibpur, passes through the town and crosses the railway from west to east, joining the main Grand Trunk Road at Ghiretti. Baidyabāti was formerly a place of considerable importance and had a thāna, which was transferred in July 1878 to Singur. It still contains several interesting old places, notably Sheorāphuli, Nimāi-Tīrtha Ghāt and Chāmpdāni. Baidyabāti is the site of the first Bengali novel, *Alāler Gharer Dulāl*, written in 1858 by Pyāri Chānd Mittra (under the *nom-de-plume* of Tek Chānd Thākur), which was translated by G. D. Oswell in 1893.

Sheorāphuli

Sheorāphuli, once an insignificant village, first rose to importance owing to its being the seat of an influential zamīndāri family, whose estate was consequently called the Sheorāphuli Rāj. Its history is as follows. *Pargana* Arsha of *Sarkār* Sātgāon belonged to two Kāyasths, Rāmeswar and his brother Vāsudev. Between 1728 and 1740 A. D. a portion of the *pargana*, comprising strips of land on both banks of the Hooghly river from Hooghly to Calcutta, was constituted a separate zamīndāri under the name of "Zamindārī Kismat Muhammad Amīnpur." This was subdivided between the second and third sons of Rāmeswar and his two nephews. The second son Makund got a nine-annas and the third son Rāmkrishna a seven-annas share of Muhammad Amīnpur; the elder nephew Manohar got 10 annas and the younger nephew Gangādhar six annas of *pargana* Boro; the remainder of Painam went to the eldest son of Rāmeswar Raghudev, the ancestor of the Bānsberiā family. Manohar removed to Sheorāphuli and Gangādhar to Bally (Howrah), where he died childless and was succeeded by Durgāprasād, son of the younger son of Manohar, thus founding the ten annas and six annas branches of the Sheorāphuli family.

The members of the family bore the title of *Sūdramani* or jewel of the Sūdras, the origin of which is accounted for as follows. In the time of Murshid Kulī Khān, a Brāhman zamīndār, having fallen into arrears with his revenue, was ordered to be dragged into the Nawāb's *Baikuntha* (paradise), *i.e.*, a tank filled with ordure. To save the Brāhman from this ignominy, an ancestor of this family paid up the entire arrears—an act of generosity which

pleased the Nawāb so much that he bestowed on him the title of *Sūdramani*. This disinterested action is attributed by one writer to Manohar; but he could not have been the zamīndār in the time of Murshid Kulī Khān, who died in 1725, and it may be attributed with more probability to Rāmeswar's eldest son, Raghudev.*

Among the descendants of Manohar, the best-known was Harish Chandra Rai, who flourished in the beginning of the 19th century. The great *hāt* at Sheorāphuli owes its origin to him, and he also built the fine temple of Rāmchandra at Guptipārā. He specially patronized the worship of Jagannāth at Māhesh (Serampore). Usually he rode to the shrine with half a dozen outriders and a long array of followers; and the annual ceremony of bathing Jagannāth's image was postponed till he arrived and issued orders for its performance. About 1830 a Teli family of Serampore having come into possession of a portion of the land forming the temple endowment, by foreclosure of a mortgage of the Bally zamīndāri, tried to usurp this honour. The priests, being bribed by the Telis, had the image bathed when the latter gave the word, and the crowds began to disperse. Harish Chandra rode in haste to the temple, caused the chief priests to be bound and carried to Sheorāphuli, when he subjected them for three days to many kinds of indignity though not to actual violence. At last, on the intercession of other zamīndārs and of the wealthy classes of Serampore, he released them on their giving a promise to respect his rights in future.

In course of time the estate became involved, and it was eventually purchased at an auction sale by the late Mahārājā Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore and the Rājā of Dighāpatiā (Rājshāhi). The Sheorāphuli family is now in reduced circumstances.

Nimāi-Tirtha Ghāt. The best known place in Baidyabāti is a *ghāt* with a flight of steps on the Hooghly river, known as Nimāi-Tīrtha Ghāt. It is mentioned by the poet Bipra Dās (1495 A. D) as the place where the merchant Chānd found a *nim* tree with roses blooming on it. It is mentioned several times in the 16th century biographies of Chaitanya and in other Bengali poems; the name Nimāi (changed from *nim*) is probably due to this association with Chaitanya, who was addressed at home as Nimāi. Two large *melas* or religious fairs are held at this *ghāt* at the time of the Bārunī and Paus Sankrānti festivals.

In old maps a place is shown hereabouts under various names, *e.g.*, Degoon in Bowrey's chart of 1688, Degon in the Pilot chart

---

* *Calcutta Review*, Vol. IV (July-December 1845), p. 489; *Bānsberia Rāj* 1908, pp. 28-30.

† *Calcutta Review*, Vol. IV, pp. 489-90.

of 1703, and Digum in Rennell's Atlas with a flag denoting a police station. This has been identified by Yule with Dirghānga,* a village above Baidyabāti, from which a District Board road runs west to Singur. But, according to a Bengali poem of the 18th century, narrating the legend of Satyanārāyan, and in that connection the voyage of a merchant down the river Hooghly, the latter is said to have touched at Degangā (below Chinsura), where *champaka* flowers bloomed on the *nim* tree.† This is evidently the Nimāi-Tirtha Ghāt of Baidyabāti.

Chāmpdāni. Chāmpdāni is mentioned in the poem of Bipra Dās (A.D. 1495). It was granted by Mīr Jafar, the Nawāb Nāzim of Bengal, to Colonel Coote, afterwards Sir Eyre Coote, Commander-in-Chief in India.* The claim was recognized by Warren Hastings in spite of the protests of Sir Philip Francis; and here Coote resided with his young wife (*née* Susanna Hutchinson). At Chāmpdāni, in 1785, Warren Hastings reviewed the remnant of the troops that had left Midnapore in January 1781 under Colonel Pearse to join in the war against Haidar Ali.‡ The jute mill at Chāmpdani is one of the oldest in the Province, having been built in 1872.

Bainchi.—A village in thāna Panduā of the Hooghly subdivision, situated 1½ miles east of Bainchi station on the East Indian Railway, with which it is connected by a *kutcha* road. It contains a High English school and an in-door dispensary, which are maintained out of a trust fund of Rs. 1,50,000 left by Bābu Bihāri Lāl Mukherji, zamīndār of the place. On the death of his widow, in December 1905, the whole estate came under the control of Government as a trust to be administered for charitable purposes. In 1908 the school was moved into the zamindār's house, and the dispensary was transferred to the old school buildings. Within its compound are two temples with arched doors, on one of which there is an inscription ascribing its erection to Saka 1604 or 1682-83 A.D. Bainchi is shown in Rennell's Atlas with a flag mark indicating a police station, and the Grand Trunk Road passes by it. In old days the neighbourhood was notorious for robberies and dacoities.

Balāgarh.—A village in the Hooghly subdivision, situated in 28° 8′ N. and 88° 28′ E. It is situated on the west bank of the Hooghly, and is usually reached by the Kālnā steamer of the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company, which touches at Srīpur.

* Hedges' *Diary*, Vol. III, p. 217.

† *Sahitya-parishad-patrika*, Vol. VIII, p. 63.

‡ *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. p. 69. This note has apparently confounded Chāmpdani with Ghiretti lying in the Bhadreswar Municipality.

It is also served by two *kutcha* roads, one of which (about 7 miles long) connects it with Dumurdā and the other (6 miles long) with Inchurā. A zamīndāri ferry plies between Balāgarh and Chākdah in Nadiā district; and the new Hooghly-Kātwā line, now under construction, will pass near the place. The village itself is small, having a population of only 763 persons, according to the census of 1901, but it is of some importance owing to its being a centre for the export of vegetables, which are grown on the *chars*; boat-building is also carried on. It is the head-quarters of an Union Committee having jurisdiction over 30 miles. The police station of Balāgarh is at Chāndrā, and there is a dispensary at Tentuliā between Chāndrā and Balāgarh.

Balāgarh is a fairly old place, which is shown in Rennell's Atlas as lying on the river, but it is now a mile inland. It contains a temple of Rādhā Gobinda, and is inhabited by many Kulin Brāhmans and Kāyasths. About a mile from the river bank is a thatched brick temple of Chandī, in the walls of which are brick panels each measuring two feet by one foot, and finely carved with flowers and human figures. Not improbably they were taken from some old ruined Bengali temple. The pillars and beams (of jack wood) are also carved with figures and tracery.

Bali (*Bāli*, sand).—A village in thāna Goghāt, of the Ārāmbāgh subdivision, situated in 22°49′N. and 87°46′E. It lies on the right bank of the river Dwārakeswar 6 miles from Ārāmbāgh, with which is is connected by the Ghātāl road. To distinguish it from Bāli (Bally) in Howrah, it is generally called Bāli-Diwānganj from a village of that name a mile to the south, and sometimes Bāli Hāt from the fact that a big *hāt* is held in Diwānganj twice a week. Silk and cotton cloths are woven in this place and its neighbourhood, but the manufacture is declining. It is the headquarters of an Union Committee, and there is a Public Works Department bungalow about two miles south, at the village of Bara Dungar, on an island between two branches of the Dwārakeswar river.

Ballabhpur.—A quarter of Serampore town, situated between Māhesh and Serampore (*q. v.*).

Bandel.—A quarter of Hooghly town (*q. v.*) situated in the north of the municipality. The name is also borne by a large station on the East Indian Railway, a mile to the west, from which the branch line to Naihāti starts. It was opened in 1904 and has been made the terminus of the Hooghly-Kātwā line now under construction. The name is a corruption of *bandar*, meaning a wharf.

Bānsberiā (*Bānsa*, bamboo and *bāti*, place).—A town in the Hooghly thāna, Hooghly subdivision, situated in 22° 58′ N. and 88° 24′ E. Population (1911) 6,108. The town extends along the west bank of the river Hooghly, from Shāhganj in Hooghly town northwards to about half a mile north of Tribenī *ghāt*; on the west it is bounded for some distance by the East Indian Railway. It is traversed from south to north by the Hooghly-Kālnā road, which is metalled up to Tribenī, where there is a suspension bridge of 3 spans over the Saraswatī. Bānsberiā is connected with Trisbīghā station on the East Indian Railway by a cross-road a mile and 3 furlongs long, and Tribenī is connected with Magrā station by another short cross-road. Between Magrā station and the Grand Trunk Road the latter road runs below a high embankment known as *Jāmāi jāngāl*, *i.e.*, the son-in-law's embankment. A short branch of the Bengal Provincial Railway also connects Magrā with Tribenī, and there is a station at the latter place. Both Bānsberiā and Tribenī are further served by the Kālnā steamers of the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company, for the traffic borne by which there is a pontoon at Tribenī railway station. *Dinghis* (small boats) also ply frequently between these places and Hooghly-Chinsura, carrying passengers and light goods. Bricks are manufactured along the river bank, while bell-metal and brass utensils are made in considerable quantities for export to Calcutta, the chief places of manufacture being Bānsberiā and Khāmārpārā in the extreme south. The public buildings located in Bānsberiā are the municipal office, a police outpost, and a High English school. An outdoor dispensary, which is to be maintained by the Bainchi estate, is now (1909) being built at Tribenī near the railway station. Formerly the place was a centre of Sanskrit learning, having 12 or 14 *tols* in 1818. Both Bānsberiā and Tribenī contain some old remains, of which an account is given below.

The village of Bānsberiā came into prominence, according to tradition, in the time of Rāghab Dutt Rai Chaudhri of Pātuli in the Burdwān district. He is said to have been given the title of *Chaudhri* in the reign of Shāh Jahān, the date of the *sanad* being 1066 H. (1656 A.D.) He was also made zamīndār of 21 *parganas* lying mostly in *Sarkār* Sātgāon, for the management of which property he made this village his headquarters, clearing it of the bamboo jungle with which it was overrun and building a large house in it. His son Rāmeswar made Bānsberiā his permanent home, and brought in families of Brāhmans Kāyasths and others. He also founded several *tols* or Sanskrit schools, and built the finely carved brick temple of Anant Deva

or Vishnu in 1679-80 A.D.: the moat round the palace is ascribed to him. As a reward for his services in attaching defaulting zamīndāris and making assessments thereof, the Emperor Aurangzeb gave him the *khilat* of *Panja Percha* (five dresses of honour) and the hereditary title of "Rājā Mahāsay" by a *sanad* dated 1090 H. (1679 A.D.) In the same year, by another *sanad*, he was granted 401 *bighās* of land for his residence, and the zamīndāri of twelve more *parganas*, including Calcutta. In the Ahālsa records Rāmeswar is entered as the zamīndār of *parganas* Arsha, etc.; and he certainly had the entire zamīndāri under his management.

After his death, some time before 1728 A.D., the estate appears to have been partitioned between his three sons, two nephews and a Brāhman dependant, and was divided into two *majkūrī* (small) zamīndāris, viz., Arsha, etc., with 11 *parganas*, and Muhammad Amīnpur with 14 *parganas*. The eldest son Raghudeb got Arsha, etc., as his one-third share, while Muhammad Amīnpur was divided into five *tāluks*, the revenue being, however, paid jointly. The two younger sons, Makund and Rāmkrishna, received 9 and 7 annas shares, respectively, of Muhammad Amīnpur proper; the two nephews, Manohar and Gangādhar, got 10 and 6 annas, respectively, of Boro; and the Brāhman Santosh came into possession of *pargana* Answarpur. Raghudeb made large grants of rent-free lands to Brāhmans, and excavated a moat in the Garhbāti, which is now silted up. As related in the article on Baidyabāti, the title *Sūdramanī* (jewel of Sūdras) was very probably conferred on him. He was succeeded by his son Govindadev, who died in 1147 B.S. (1740 A.D.). He is said to have lost Agradwīp owing to the timidity of his agent at the Nawāb's Court, who would not admit his master's ownership of the place for fear of his being punished for some loss of life which had occurred in a *mela* there.

When Gobindadev died, he had no child living, and on this account the Burdwān Rāj, with the sanction of the Nāwab, took possession of *pargana* Arsha, etc.—in fact, of the bulk of the property on the west side of the Hooghly river; while Rājā Krishna Chandra took possession of *pargana* Halda on the east bank of the river. Three months after Govinda's death, his wife gave birth to a son, who was named Nrisinhadev. By this time the family retained only one small *mauza*, Kulihandi, which the *Faujdār* of Hooghly would not permit the Burdwān Rāj to appropriate; and when the posthumous boy had attained manhood, the English had taken possession of all the

property. After various petitions to the English Government, the then Governor-General, Warren Hastings, directed that those *mahāls* of his ancestor that had not been taken possession of by the Burdwān zamindār, but had been included in the 24 *parganas* granted to the English Government, should be restored to Nrisinhadev. Accordingly, he was given possession of nine *parganas* from 1779 A.D. Nrisinhadev Rai was a man of some versatility. He built in 1788-89 A.D. a small temple dedicated to the goddess Kālī or Swayambhava, made a map of Bengal for Warren Hastings, translated the *Uddisa-tantra* into Bengali, and assisted Rājā Jaynārāyan Ghoshāl of Benares in translating the *Kāsi-khanda* into Bengali verse. He left his home for Benares in 1792, there became initiated in Tantric rites, and returned in 1799. He then began to build a large temple in honour of Hanseswarī, but died in 1802 before it was finished.

Nrisinhadeb left a minor son, during whose youth his mother, Rānī Sankarī, managed the estate. She completed in 1814 the temple of Hanseswarī and Chaturdaseswar, which cost nearly five lakhs of rupees, expended nearly a lakh of rupees in the ceremony of *tulā-purusha* (weighing one's person), and spent much in charity, but otherwise led a simple and unostentatious life. There was an estrangement between her and her son Kailāshdev, who ultimately brought a suit for recovery of possession of the estate, and obtained a decree in the lower court. The Rānī then appealed to the Sadar Dīwāni Adālat. At length, both sides grew weary of the litigation, and in 1826 entered into a compromise, by which the property became Kailāshdev's, but 16 *mauzas* were left to the Rānī for performing *dev shebā*. Kailāshdev died in 1838 leaving a grandson Debendradev and three daughters, one of whom was married to Srīnārāyan Singha, son of the well-known Lālā Bābu of the Pāikpārā family. Debendra's sudden and premature death in 1852 was a great shock to his old grandmother, who six months later executed a will, by which she devised her estates to the goddess Hanseswarī, nominating her three great-grandsons as *Sebāits*, and appointing their mother, Rāni Kāsiswarī, as executrix. A few days later, on the night before the day of the Kāli Pūjā, she died at an advanced age.

Rānī Kāsiswarī managed the estate until Purnendudev, her son, attained his majority. Purnendudev, who had been educated in the Hooghly College, was distinguished for his liberality and public spirit. During the Mutiny of 1857 he supplied the local

feeder road leading up to it. He contributed half the cost of metalling the Strand Road from Keotā (north of Bāndel) to Tribenī, and made a free gift of a strip of land along the Cockerell road in Hooghly town. He further maintained a charitable dispensary, kept up an old alms-house at the palace, and did much to encourage education, the present High English school being opened by him in 1893. He died on 25th July 1896, leaving four sons, Satindradev, Kshitindradev, Manindradev, and Ramendradev, all of whom are still living.*

The scene of *Nīla-darpana* (Mirror of Indigo), a Bengali drama by the late Bābu Dinabandhu Mittra, is said to have been laid in an indigo factory of Bānsberiā. For translating this work the Revd. J. Long was sent to jail for a month and was fined Rs. 1,000, a sum paid for him by a Bengali gentleman.† Close to the river the Tatwabodhini Sabhā of Calcutta, the original name of the modern Adī Brāhma Samāj, had in 1843 a flourishing school with 200 boys; but as some of the boys became Vedāntists, many parents withdrew their sons from the school, and Dwārkanāth Tagore having died in England, his son was unable to maintain it. A perpetual lease of the ground with the bungalow was then purchased by Dr. Duff with Rs. 6,000 supplied by Major, afterwards Sir James, Outram. The Mission School started here by Dr. Duff was in existence till 30 years ago.‡ Before this, there was a Church at Bānsberiā said to have been the first Christian Church in Bengal with an Indian Minister; the latter was one Tārāchānd, a well-informed man who spoke English, French and Portuguese with fluency.§

The chief objects of architectural interest are found within the Garhbāti, *i.e.*, the fort compound of the Bānsberiā zamīndārs. It has two moats, one dug by Rāmeswar, and the other by Raghudev, but the latter has more or less silted up. The other moat is crossed by a causeway, ending in a fine gateway (both said to have been built by Nrisinhadev), with rows of *vakul* trees on both sides forming a broad avenue. The old palace has disappeared, being replaced by a plain double-storeyed building with a long range of rooms.

To the east and north-east of the modern palace are the three temples of Vishnu, Swayambhava or Kālī, and Hanseswarī. The Vishnu temple is the oldest, being built in 1679-80 A.D.

* S. C. Dev. *The Bānsberia Raj*, Calcutta, 1908.

It is of brick, in the Bengali style, with a tower on the roof. Its front, facing east, is covered with brick panels, elaborately carved. North of it is a small unpretentious flat-roofed temple, built in 1788-89 and dedicated to Swayambhava.

The Hanseswarī temple stands further to the east, and is the largest of the three. It was completed in 1814-15 after 15 years' work; several Benares masons were employed, and the roof is of the Benāres style. It has 13 cupolas, viz., eight over the verandahs and their corners, then four higher cupolas in the middle, and lastly a central tower (the tallest) rising 60 to 70 feet high. On the ground floor is the shrine with a verandah on each side divided into rooms. The presiding deity is Hanseswarī, whose image is of *nīm* wood, painted blue; she is seated on a lotus flower, the stalk of which springs from the navel of Siva lying prostrate. The verandah on the south, which forms the front, is supported by 12 ornamented arches. The painted ceiling, the lattice-work above the ceiling and the stone fountain below, have a pleasing effect, in spite of the circumscribed space. In each of the cupolas above the roof is a marble image of Siva, so that there are in all 13 images, which with the Siva in the ground-floor make up the fourteen referred to in the Sanskrit inscription as Chaturdaseswar. The upper floors are accessible through three staircases in the north verandah. The ground block, including the shrine, is 44½ feet square; the front verandah on the south, which is called *Nāt-mandir*, *i.e.*, the dancing-hall, is nearly square, measuring 22′ 2″ by 21′ 10″. Though spoilt by the ground floor being divided into a number of rooms and by the cupolas being crowded too close together, the effect on the whole is excellent, but it is marred by recent white-washings and plasterings.

Tribenī. Tribenī (*Tri*, three, and *benī*, braids) forms the northernmost part of the town. It is an old place, sometimes called *Mukta-venī* (open-braided) to distinguish it from Prayāg (Allahābād), which was called *Yukta-venī* (joint-braided). The place is so named from the fact that three streams branch out at this point, the Bhāgīrathī flowing to the south, the Sarasawatī to the west (right), and the Jamunā or Kānchrāpārā *khāl* to the east (left). This junction of the three streams is mentioned in the *Pavana-dūtam*, a Sanskrit poem of the last quarter of the twelfth century, but the sanctity of the place was recognized much earlier. In the early Musalmān period the town was of considerable importance, and was often referred to as Tripanī, Tripanī Shāhpur or Fīrūzābād. With the removal of the headquarters of Government to Sātgāon, probably in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, Tribenī lost its

importance. In the middle of the sixteenth century it appears to have passed into the hands of the Oriyā king, Makunda Harichandan; the broad flight of steps on the river and the *Jāmāi jāngāl*, a high embankment stretching from Tribenī to Mahanād, are attributed to the Oriyās. By 1568 A. D. Salaimān Kararānī, the Afghān Sultān of Bengal, had reconquered this part of the country, but within a decade it passed under the rule of the Mughal Emperor Akbar.

Owing to its sanctity and its situation on the river, Tribenī was in early days a halting place for boats passing up and down the river, which is mentioned in the poem of Bipra Dās (1495 A.D.) and in later Bengali poems. In 1682 Mr. William Hedges passed by "Trippany" in his journey by boat to and from Cossimbazar, and in 1717 his nephew, Robert Hedges, as President, received, in great state, near "Trevinny" the English Embassy on its return from the court of the Emperor Farakhsiyār. The Dutch Admiral Stavorinus also visited "Terbonee" in 1770. Tribenī with Bānsberiā had several Sanskrit *tols*, and the famous Pandit Jagannāth Tarkapanchānan, the tutor of Sir William Jones and compiler of a digest of Hindu laws, was one of its distinguished scholars. This devotion to Sanskrit learning has now nearly died out, Sanskrit being taught only in one *tol*, kept up by one of his descendants.

The existing remains in Tribenī are few. The only Hindu remains lie immediately north of the junction of the Saraswatī Khāl with the Hooghly, *viz.*, (1) two flights of steps side by side leading into the river bed, each consisting of more than thirty steps; (2) a group of seven small temples, 50 yards from the river, of which the central one has a tower about 30 feet high and 12 feet square, with a lingam inside. The Muhammadan remains lie on the high river bank south of the Saraswatī Khāl. They consist of (1) an *āstāna* with two enclosures, and (2) a ruined mosque, 20 yards to the west of the *āstāna*. The first enclosure is built of large basalt stones; its east wall faces the river and contains mutilated Hindu idols and dragons; in it is fixed, at a height of 6 feet, a piece of iron said to have been the handle of Zafar Khān's battle axe. The second enclosure is of sandstone and contains four tombs, said by tradition to be those of Zafar Khān, of his two sons, Ain Khān Ghāzi and Ghain Khān Ghāzi, and of the wife of his third son, Barkhān Ghāzi. Barkhān Ghāzi himself was buried in the first enclosure with his two sons, Rahīm Khān and Karim Khān. The mosque beyond the second enclosure appears to have been built with materials obtained from Hindu temples. The low basalt pillars supporting its arches are

unusually thick, and the domes have horizontal arches (Hindu), *i.e.*, are made up of successive rings of stones, the diameter of each layer being somewhat less than that of the layer below; the whole is capped by a circular stone, covering the small aperture at the top.* Some of the domes are broken, and several basalt pillars lie scattered about; the foundations of other structures may be seen close by. A good deal of the jungle has now been cleared, and the buildings are visible from the road.

Six old inscriptions in Arabic have been found on the western wall of the mosque, and two in the second enclosure of the *āstāna*. The most interesting of the inscriptions are one in the mosque, dated 698 H. (1298 A. D.), recording the erection of a mosque by Zafar Khān, the Turk, and another in the enclosure, dated 713 H. (1313 A. D.), recording the erection of a *madrasa* named *Dārul Khairāt* (house of benevolence) by Khān Muhammad Zafar Khān in the reign of Firuz Shāh. The inscriptions are in black basalt with the letters raised, and the characters are mostly in Tughrā. On the reverse of the basalt inscriptions in the second enclosure are carved several serpents and dragons, from which it appears that the stone was taken from some Hindu temple. According to a genealogical chart preserved by the *mutawallis* of Zafar Khān's tomb, he is said to have come from Mārgāon in Murshidābād. The traditions declare that he was killed in a battle with Rājā Bhudeb. His third son, Barkhān Ghāzi, is said to have conquered the Rājā of Hooghly (?) and married his daughter, who lies buried in the second enclosure. Zafar Khān is connected with Shāh Safi-ud-dīn of Panduā, being represented as either his uncle or his friend and associate, and is also connected with Saiyad Fakhr-ud-dīn, father of Saiyad Jamāl-ud-dīn, who built a mosque at Sātgāon in 936 H. or nearly 240 years later.

Several important *melās* (religious fairs) are held at Tribenī. They are chiefly concerned with bathing in the Bhāgīrathī on auspicious days, *e.g.*, (1) Dasaharā, in honour of the Ganges, in June; (2) Sankrāntis, especially Uttarāyan, when the sun enters the Tropic of Capricorn, on the last day of the month of Paus (in the middle of January), and Mahā-vishuva, when the year ends (about the middle of April); (3) Bārunī, in honour of Baruna, the god of waters, in Chaitra (March-April);

* M. M. Chakravarti, *Pre-Mughal Mosques of Bengal*, J. A. S. B., 1910, pp. 23-24.

(4) Eclipse-days. Large crowds visit the place during the Uttarāyan-Sankrānti and Bārunī festivals.

Bhadreswar.—A town in thāna Serampore, of the Serampore subdivision, situated in 22° 50′N. and 88° 21′E. It is bounded by the Hooghly river on the east, the East Indian Railway line on the west, French Chandernagore on the north and Baidyabāti on the south. It forms a municipality divided into four wards, *viz.*, Gaurhāti (Ghiretti), Bhadreswar, Telinipārā and Mānkundu. The Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta passes through the town, while the East Indian Railway touches it at two stations, Bhadreswar and Mānkundu; and there are four ferries, two of which belong to the District Board, *viz.*, Telinipārā to Shāmnagar and Paltā Ghāt to Ghiretti, while two are zamīndāri. It contains a town outpost of Serampore thāna, the Municipal office, an outdoor dispensary and a High English school. Sanskrit is taught in a *tol* at Bhadreswar and in 3 *tols* at Gaurhāti, grammar being the favourite subject of study: there were 10 *tols* in 1818. Bhadreswar is practically a mill town, the Victoria Jute Works being situated at Telinipārā and the Dalhousie and Northbrook (recently opened) Jute Mills at Bhadreswar. The population has grown from 7,417 in 1872 to 24,353 in 1901, the bulk of the increase being due to immigration, as indicated by the growth in males from 3,518 to 15,862 and their large excess over females who in 1911 numbered only 8,491.

Bhadreswar is an old place, being mentioned in the poem of Bipra Dās (1495 A.D.) and shown in the Pilot chart of 1703 as Buddesy. It is so called after a temple of Bhadreswar, a title of Siva. The shrine is largely frequented, chiefly by females, in the hope of obtaining cure from illness or the attainment of some cherished wish. In old days Bhadreswar was a great mart, serving Calcutta and the surrounding country within a radius of 20 miles, but the competition of Sheorāphuli has greatly reduced its importance. It has now three markets, one in the Victoria Mill *bastī* near the river belonging to Rājā Piyāri Mohan Mukherji, and two others in Telinipārā and Bhadreswar belonging to the Banerji family of Telinipārā. The chief articles of trade are jute and rice. **Bhadreswar.**

Gaurhāti or Ghiretti adjoins Chāmpdāni on the north, but not all of it is British territory. A long strip, is in the possession of the French, and is known as Farasisganj—*i.e.*, the French market. French Ghiretti lies almost entirely between the Grand Trunk Road and the river; in its northern corner are the ruins of the country house of the Governors of French Chandernagore. It is shown in Bolt's map of Bengal (*circa* 1770 **Ghiretti.**

A.D.) as French Garden and in Joseph's *Survey of the Hoogly* as Old French Garden. According to tradition, the house was built by Dupleix, and it existed in the time of Stavorinus, when the Dutch Governor was received here in state by the French Chief M. Chevalier. "Stavorinus tells us that on the 22nd of February 1770 the Dutch paid a national visit to the French Governor, and as these visits were accompanied with much ceremony when the guest was received at the chief factory, the Dutch Governor preferred paying it at the country seat of Ghiretti. The party set off from Chinsura at four o'clock in six carriages, and reached the chateau at six, where they were received at the bottom of the steps and conducted into a large saloon in which the principal ladies and gentlemen of Chandernagore were assembled. At seven the Dutch guests were invited to witness a play in a slight building which had been erected for the purpose. The play was over at ten, when they were led into a large room, in which a hundred ladies and gentlemen sat down to an elegant supper. The party broke up at one, and returned to Chinsura."*

The place figured somewhat prominently in 1756-57. After the massacre of the Black Hole, some of the English went up to the "French Gardens," where Mr. Young, the Prussian supercargo, resided. In May and June 1757 Clive halted at the "French Gardens, Chandernagore," waiting for the confirmation of the secret treaty with Mīr Jafar; and it was from this place that on the 12th June Clive started on his momentous march towards Murshidābād.†

South of the French Gardens is the village of Ghiretti proper, where a considerable portion of the Bengal army used to be quartered. From the Proceedings of the Calcutta Council, dated 21st March 1763, we find that it was resolved to place half the Bengal army at Ghiretti and the other half at Patna; while Stavorinus (1770 A.D.) noticed that at "Garetty" the English had a military fort, often containing a thousand or more men. In Rennell's Atlas, plate xix (1781), "Cantonments" are entered just below Ghyretty. It is not known when the troops were withdrawn.

Bhitargarh—(*Bhitar*, inner, and *garh*, fort). A part of Mandārangarh See Mandāran.

Chāmpdāni.—See Baidyabāti.

Chandernagore.—A town on the river Hooghly, situated a short distance below Chinsura in 22° 52′N. and 88° 52′E. It consists of two parts, that to the south belonging to the French and that to the north to the British; they are separated by a ditch, which the French were allowed to dig by the 13th article of the treaty of Versailles in 1783. The French territory is about 4 miles long and one mile broad, extending along the river from Telinipārā to British Chandernagore. Its history has been given in Chapter III; a further description of this foreign settlement is beyond the scope of this work. British Chandernagore forms the southernmost ward of the Hooghly-Chinsura Municipality (*vide* Hooghly . The name Chandernagore is derived either from *chandra*, moon, or *chandan*, sandalwood, and *nagar*, town.

Chandītalā.—A village in the Serampore subdivision, situated on the right bank of the Saraswatī. It is the headquarters of a police station with jurisdiction over 72 square miles, and of an Union Committee with an area of 2 square miles. It is touched by the Howrah-Sheakhālā Light Railway, and the station forms a junction for a short branch line to Janāi. The village is an old place shown in Rennell's Atlas as the site of a police station from which several roads radiated

Chinsura. (Vernacular *Chunchurā*, derivation not traceable) —A part of the Hooghly-Chinsura Municipality. *See* Hooghly.

Dādpur.—A village situated on the Chinsura-Dhaniākhāli road, with an independent outpost. Some *chikan* (embroidered) work is made in the neighbourhood

Dhaniākhāli.—A large village in the Hooghly subdivision and the headquarters of the largest thāna in either that or the Serampore subdivision (135 square miles). It is a mile distant from the railway station of the same name on the Bengal Provincial Railway, and contains a District Board bungalow. In the middle of the 18th century the East India Company had a large *aurung* or weaving factory at this place, which was referred to as Dooneacolly. In those days it was a more important place, the main road from Hooghly to Silimath (Salimābād) passing by "Deniachali" (*vide* Valentyn's map published in 1725). In Rennell's Atlas Deneacolly is shown with a flag indicating a police station and as the junction point of several roads.

Dīwānganj—A village in the Arāmbāgh subdivision and thāna, contiguous to Bāli (q. v.).

Dwārbāsinī.—A village in thāna Panduā, of the Hooghly subdivision. It is ¾th of a mile from the station of the same name on the Bengal Provincial Railway, and contains an out-door dispensary and the *kachahri* of the zamīndār, Rājā Piyāri Mohan

Mukherji. The name is that of a goddess and is derived from *dwār*, a door, and *bāsinī*, resident. The following traditions connected with the place are quoted from Crawford's History of the Hooghly District :—

"At the time of the Musalmān invasion of Bengal a line of Hindu kings of the Sadgop caste had their capital at Dwārbāsinī. The last of them was named Dwār Pāl. His dominions were invaded by a Musalmān general named Muhammad Alī. The first battle fought was indecisive. In Dwār Pāl's palace enclosure was a tank called the *Jibat Kund*, which had the property of curing the wounds of all who bathed in it, and even of restoring to life the bodies of those killed in battle, if they were placed in the holy water. A Musalmān saint, named Saha Jokai, obtained permission from Dwār Pāl to bathe in this tank, and entered the water with a piece of beef concealed in his garments ; the pollution thus caused destroyed the miraculous properties of the tank. Deprived of its help, Dwār Pāl was totally defeated by the invaders in a second battle, after which he and his whole family burned themselves on a funeral pile within his palace, which was thus reduced to a heap of ruins, known as *Dhan Pata*. Before his death he predicted that whenever a respectable Hindu of the Sadgop caste should come to live at Dwārbāinī, he would become its king. It is said that as long as the Musalmān dominion lasted, no Sadgop was ever allowed to settle there.

"The tank now shown as the *Jibat Kund* is simply a small shallow pool on the south side of a much larger tank known as *Kāmana* (prayer-fulfilling). A small tomb on the east of the *Jibat Kund* is said to be that of the *Pīr*, Saha Jokai. Another large tank, a little to the east, now divided by cross *bāndhs* into three small tanks, is known as *Chandra Kup* (tank of moonshine). Some distance further north are another large tank, called *Pāpharan* (sin-removing), and a series of seven tanks called *Sāt Satin* after the Rājā's seven wives. On the south-east of Dwārbāinī is a slightly raised mound, composed of broken brick, known as the *garh*, or fort. All over the village, a little below the surface, are the remains of brick houses and walls, with many filled-up wells ; and local tradition says that much treasure has from time to time been dug up, as well as many broken sculptured stones."

Gangādharpur.—An estate in the Serampore subdivision (*tauzi* number 46), with an area of about 2,348 acres, the rent-roll being Rs. 52,170 and the land revenue Rs. 47,602. The estate is so called after a village of the same name in the Balāgarh

thána, and the present proprietors are Bābus Chandra Mohan Banerji, Hari Mohan Banerji and their co-sharers, all descendants of Baddi Nāth Banerji. The early history of the estate will be found in the article on Sarsā.

Ghiretti or Gaurhāti.—A village in Bhadreswar town (q. v.)

Goghāt (*Go*, cattle and *ghāti*, hill pass).—A small village in the Arāmbāgh subdivision, situated 6 miles west of Arāmbāgh town. It is the headquarters of a thāna, and lies on the Old Nāgpur road, not far from Bhitargarh and Garh Mandāran, and 3 miles east of Kāmārpukhur, the home of Rāmakrishna Paramhansa, where there is a rest-house of the District Board.

Guptipārā (*Gupti*, concealed and *pārā*, quarters).—A large village in thāna Balāgarh of the Hooghly subdivision, in the extreme north-east of the district, situated about 1½ miles west of the right bank of the Hooghly. The houses extend along a wide road for about a mile and half, and include some fine modern buildings belonging to the Sen family. The village is connected with Dumurdā by two District Board roads, but the usual way of reaching it is by the Kālnā steamer, which stops at the river bank nearest to it. It contains a High English school, and was formerly a centre of Sanskrit learning. Mathurā Bhattāchārya, the author of *Shyāma Kalpa Latikā*, an anthology of religious poems in Sanskrit, flourished here, but there are now no *tols*.

Guptipārā was a well-known place in the 18th century. "Guptapara" is shown in the map of Stavorinus (*circa* 1770 A. D.), but on the left bank of the river. This, if correct, indicates an older site; for in the Bengali poems of the 18th century, the village is distinctly mentioned as being on the right bank.* The former importance of the place is still attested by the number of Brāhmans and Baidyas residing in it, and by its temples and religious fairs. The Revd. J. Long in 1846 remarked:—"On the opposite side of the river (*i.e.* right bank) is Guptapara, the people of which are famous for their activity and wit and the purity of their Bengali: there are 15 tolas (*tols*) and many Pandits who study the *Nyāya Shāstra* (*sic*); it is also notorious for thieves and Brāhmans. In 1770, Cherinjib (Chiranjib) Bhattāchārya of Guptapara composed in Sanskrit the *Vidyanmodu(a) Tarangini*: it treats of Hindu philosophy, and is in high repute among the natives. It was translated into English in 1832 by Rājā Kalikissen of Calcutta."† The village used to be surraunded by

---

*_Satyanārāyaner Kathā_, _Sāhitya-parishad patrikā_, Vol. VIII, p. 63; _Chandrakanta_, Do. Vol. X, p. 130.

† _Calcutta Review_, Vol. VI, p. 415.

woods which were infested by monkeys, *e.g.*, Stavorinus mentions having seen a great number of monkeys in a wood near the village. It is said that Rājā Krishna Chandra Rai procured monkeys from this place and had a ceremony of marriage performed for them at Krishnagar, inviting many *pandits* to the ceremony, the expenses of which amounted to about half a lakh. To ask persons whether they come from Guptipārā is proverbially tantamount to asking whether they are monkeys. These woods and the distance from headquarters naturally favoured the commission of thefts and dacoities.

The chief object of interest is a group of temples at the eastern end of the village. Ranged round a quadrangle, and enclosed within a rather high wall, are four shrines known as the temples of Chaitanyadev, Brindābanchandra, Rāmchandra and Krishnachandra, all in the Bengal style of architecture. The oldest is that of Chaitanyadev which faces east and has a door on the west ; there were three cusped arches on the east, but they have been walled up, leaving a small door. Its roof is of the *Jor-Bangala* type, with two iron rods to represent spires. It contains the images of Chaitanya and Nityānand, the two great Vaishnava preachers of Bengal. According to a note in the records of a local Pandit, the temple was built by Biseswar Rai in the reign of Akbar, and therefore apparently in the beginning of the 17th century ; this claim to antiquity is supported by its thin bricks and archaic appearance.

The shrine of Brindābanchandra is the biggest of the temples; indeed, the whole group is often called Brindābanchandra's *math* Its roof is curved like that of a Bengali thatched hut and is capped by a duplicate thereof. The entrance door and the inside of the sanctum are painted with figures of Krishna, Rādhā and Gopīs, of trees, foliage, etc. In the sanctum are wooden images of Krishna, Rādhā, Garud, Jagannāth and Balarām. The finest of the group, however, is the temple of Rāmchandra. It is made of red-coloured bricks, and has a curved roof ; over the roof is a tower-like structure, to which access is had by a staircase. The front wall of the verandah, and also, to some extent, of the sanctum, is covered with brick panels finely carved in the best style of Bengali art, with figures of gods and goddesses and scenes from the epics and Purānas, chiefly Vaishnavite. The temple is said to have been built by Harishchandra Rai of Sheorāphuli, probably towards the end of the 18th century. It contains painted wooden images of Rāmchandra, Lakshman (to the right) and Sītā (to the left), the images being the largest of all those at Guptipārā. Just opposite this shrine, on the other side of the quadrangle, stands the fourth temple of Krishnachandra, with small

images of Krishna and Rādhā.* It is said to have been built by Dandī Madhusudan in the time of Nawāb Alī Vardi Khān. The story is that the Dandī, who was in charge of the *math*, fell into arrears with his revenue, upon which the Nawāb summoned Srī Brindābanjiu to Murshidābād. The Dandī, fearing desecration and losing all hope of getting the god back, set up a new image of Krishna and Rādhā, and built this new temple for it.

The *math* has *debottar* property yielding an income of Rs. 1,000 a month. The founder of the *math* was Satyadev Saraswatī; Bisweswar Rai of Guptipārā, who built the temple of Chaitanya-dev, was his disciple. Satyadev is said to have induced the zamīndārs of the district to build the main temple of Brindābanchandra. The *math* remained in charge of Mahants, who bore the title of Saraswatī, up to 1903. The last Mahant was dismissed by the Civil Court on account of mismanagement and incapacity, and since then the estate has been under the charge of a Manager. The chief Vaishnava festivals, viz., Rās, Dol, Rath and Ulta-Rath, are observed here, the two last named being attended by large crowds.

Haripāl.—A village in the Serampore subdivision, lying between the Kānā Nadī and the Tārakeswar branch of the East Indian Railway. Here are located a police station, a Union Committee, a post office, a High English school, a railway station, and close by a District Board bungalow. There is also an out-door dispensary opened by the District Board in 1908; Srimatī Surhita Sundarī Dāsi, widow of the late Bāmā Charn Bhar of Haripāl, contributed Rs. 25,000 as an endowment. Cotton cloths are manufactured on hand looms in considerable quantities in the neighbourhood, Haripāl and Dwārhātā being centres of the industry. This industry is evidently a survival of the manufacture carried on in the 18th century, when the East India Company had a large *aurung* or weaving factory at Haripāl. In 1755 Rs. 85,443 were advanced to weavers in this *aurung*, while it is noted in the Minutes of Consultations of Fort William of the same year that the Balasore *mulmuls* purchased at this place had been much improved. In an official report on the *aurungs* in 1767, it is said that at Dwārhātā the Company's affairs were "in a distressed situation," nearly Rs. 50,000 of the last year's advances being outstanding. After this, the Company kept up a Commercial Residency at Haripāl from about 1790 to 1835 for the purchase of cotton fabrics. About the latter year the

* *Bengali Temples*, M. M. Chakravarti, J. A. S. B., 1909, pp. 141—146, and figs. 3 and 9.

Residency was abolished and its site with buildings sold off. "Herpaul" appears in Rennell's Atlas, plate vii (1779 A.D.).

Hridayrāmpur.—An estate in the Serampore subdivision with an area of 19,831 acres, a rent roll of Rs. 54,655 and a land revenue demand of Rs. 44,840. The estate formerly belonged to the zamīndārs of Singur, but was bought from them by Bābu Jaya Krishna Mukherji of Uttarpārā, originally a record-keeper in the Hooghly Collectorate, whose descendants are large landed proprietors. It subsequently passed to Rāj Krishna Mukherji, his brother, when there was a partition between them. It is now in possession of Bābu Manohar Mukherji of Uttarpārā, Bābu Srīnāth Chatterji of Kālnā, Bābu Girijā Nāth Rai Chaudhri of Sātkhirā and other co-sharers. The estate is so called after a village of the same name in the Dhaniākhāli thāna.

Hooghly.—The headquarters of the district, situated on the west bank of the river Hooghly (Bhāgīrathī) in 22° 55′ N. and 88° 24′E. Population (1911) 28,916. The name is probably derived from *hoglā*, a reed which once grew abundantly in this locality. The Grand Trunk Road passes through the town, of which it forms the western boundary for more than two miles, and the Kālnā steamers of the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company touch it on their way up and down the river. The town is, however, most easily reached by rail. The East Indian Railway runs near the western boundary and has three stations within the limits of the town, viz., Chinsura, Hooghly and Bandel Junction. The Eastern Bengal State Railway passes on the other side of the river, with a station at Naihāti, which is connected with Bandel by a branch line crossing the river over the Jubilee Bridge; the river can also be crossed by boats plying between Naihāti and Hooghly.

The municipality which was created in 1865, consists practically of two towns, Hooghly and Chinsura, and is consequently often called Hooghly-Chinsura. It extends along the river bank for more than five miles, its breadth varying from half a mile to a mile and half. It is divided into six wards, the northern three falling within Hooghly and the southern three within Chinsura. The wards are formed by grouping together several *pārās* or quarters of the towns.

Shāhganj and Keotā. The first ward contains Shāhganj, Keotā and Bandel. Shāhganj, which contains a police out-post, is a place of some trade with a large market. The principal *ganjes* or granaries of the town were formerly located here: these granaries were looted by the British forces on 15th January 1757.* The

* S. C. Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, Vol. III, pp. 37, 43; Vol. II, p. 199.

place is named after Shāhzādāh Azim-us-Shān, the grandson of Aurangzeb, and Nawāb of Bengal from 1697 to 1707, to whom an old mosque in this quarter is attributed.* South of Shāhganj is Keotā, which is probably so called from a colony of Kewats or fishermen on the river bank.

Further south is Bandel, a name evidently derived from the Bengali word *bandar*, meaning a port. Bandel appears to have been the port of Hooghly town in the time of the Portuguese and the Mughals; while Tieffenthaler (1785) refers to the whole town of Hooghly as Bander. The vernacular name is Balāgarh (the strong fort). Bandel.

The only remains of interest are the church and monastery. The former replaced an old church built by the Portuguese in their fort at Hooghly in 1599, which was razed to the ground by the Muhammadans on the capture of the town in 1632. The Portuguese were soon afterwards allowed to return to Hooghly and appear to have settled in Bandel, Bowrey remarking (1679):—"They (the Portuguese) have a very large town, about one English mile above the English Factory; it is called the Bandel. I judge it is 2 English miles in circuit, very populous of men, women and children. They are for the most part very poore."† The present church and monastery are said to have been built in 1660 by Gomez de Soto, who had the keystone of the old church (with the date 1599 on it), which had been saved from the sack of Hooghly, set up over the eastern (river-side) gate of the monastery. In 1908 it was removed to the western side; and there it may be seen over the western gate.

Bowrey relates a curious story about a Portuguese church of his time. "Anno Domini 1676 the Portuguesses (of Hooghly) haveinge collected a good summ of moneys to the End they might build a very large and decent Church, they now made preparation to begin the worke. Haveinge provided stone, brick, lime, timber, they pull downe the old one, and begin the new foundation, but ere one-fourth finished the Moors, by order of their Governour, stopped the worke, commandinge the workmen upon paine of imprisonment not to proceede, to the great griefe of the Fathers."‡ It is not known to which church these remarks apply; it may have been the Church of Misericordia, which stood close by. There was also a Jesuit College at Bandel on

* *Riyāzu-s-Sālatin*, transl., p. 244, note 1.

† *Countries round the Bay of Bengal*, pp. 191-92.

‡ *id.*, pp. 194-95.

the way to Keotā, of which mention is made in 1723. This is shown in Tieffenthaler's sketch (1785) as lying north-west of Bāndel town with an explanatory note "Aedes Sacra Collapsa Soc. Jesu." In January 1757, when the British attacked Hughly fort, they "landed at the Portuguese Church above Hooghly" and 'saw from the top of the church two miles into the country;" while Sir Eyre Coote noted in his journal that he "took possession of a Portuguese convent."†

The Church, which is dedicated to Nossa Senhora di Rozario (Our Lady of the Rosary), is somewhat singular in being built north and south and in having its principal altar at the north end. High up in a niche under the cross in the centre of the main façade is a statue of the Virgin (Our Blessed Lady of Happy Voyage) and child. It is said to have been originally on the altar of the old church which the Muhammadans destroyed. Legend relates that Father Da Cruz, whose miraculous escape has been mentioned in Chapter III, and a pious Portuguese merchant, who was a close friend of his, used to spend many hours in prayer before this image. After the capture of the fort the merchant, fearing sacrilege, took it from the altar and jumped into the river and swam across with it, but was seen no more. One night after the Portuguese returned a great storm burst, and the roaring of the river awoke Father Da Cruz. He heard a voice like that of his friend crying "Hail Our Lady of Happy Voyage, who hast given us the victory. Arise, Oh Father, and pray for us all." On looking out from the window he saw that the river was lit up with a strange light, and it seemed as if some one was coming towards the church. In another moment the light disappeared, the noise ceased, and everything was still. Early next morning some natives were seen near the church compound shouting that *Guru Mā* (their name for the Virgin Mary) had come to reign there. To his great surprise Father Da Cruz found the image a few yards from the gate. He placed it on the principal altar, and, to commemorate this miraculous event, a special festival was instituted at which the image was carried in procession. Some years afterwards it was removed to the place which it now occupies. Below it is the model of a full-rigged ship, a votive offering of a ship's captain, who thus commemorated his escape from shipwreck.

In front of the church stands a ship's mast, of which the following story is told. While the religious ceremonies in connection with the discovery of the image were about to begin,

† S. C. Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, Vol. III, pp. 14, 43.

a large Portuguese ship suddenly appeared at the *ghāt* facing the Church. The service being over, the Captain had an interview with Father Da Cruz, in the course of which he related how his vessel had encountered a terrific storm in the Bay of Bengal. The Captain had then made a vow promising the Virgin an offering, if they reached harbour in safety. His prayer was heard, for the storm soon began to abate and after a short time perfect calm succeeded. Favourable wind and tide then brought them to the Bandel *ghāt*. In fulfilment of his vow, the Captain had one mast of his vessel removed and presented it to the church.

The church has three altars, a small organ and several tombstones, the oldest being that of Elizabeth da Silva who died in 1756: a Latin inscription states that she died borne down by trouble and weakness caused by the war waged by the Moors against the English. The church property of 777 *bighās* of land granted by Shâh Shujâ in 1646 has now decreased to 380 *bighās*, yielding a rental of Rs. 1,240 per annum. In the monastery is a spacious hall built 80 years ago by Mr. Baretto and other Catholics of Calcutta, which was intended to serve as a sanatorium for invalids. The monastery used to be occupied by Augustinian friars, the last of whom died in 1869, and it is now in charge of the Parish Priest who, however, retains the title of Prior. Between the hall and the church there is a picturesque courtyard, with a grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, surrounded by cloisters.

Four festivals are specially observed in the Church, viz., the feast of the Blessed Lady of Happy Voyage, in the month of May; the feast of Saint Augustine, in August; the feast of the Blessed Lady of the Rosary, in November; and in Lent a solemn procession representing the journey of Christ to Calvary with the cross on his shoulder.

The only other building noticeable in Bandel is the old Circuit House, which stands on the river bank in an extensive compound. It used to be the residence of Mr. D. C. Smyth, the Judge-Magistrate of Hooghly, and was purchased by Government in 1856 for Rs. 16,000. It was occupied for a long time by the Dacoity Commissioners, and for some time towards the end of the 19th Century by the D Company of the Bengal Military Police. The men, however, suffered from fever, and consequently in 1901 the company was removed to the Dutch Barrack at Chinsura.

In the early days of British rule Bandel was a favourite resort of the Europeans of Calcutta, referred to as "sweet Bandel," "the

pleasant and healthy settlement of Bandel," etc.* Now-a-days it is far from healthy. Cream cheeses are made here and exported to Calcutta and elsewhere; this industry dates back to the time of the Portuguese.

Bāli. Ward No. II, which contains Bāli, Hooghly town proper, and Golghāt, is the oldest and was at one time the most populous part of the municipality. Bāli is separated from Bandel by a deep ditch, over which is a bridge built in the time of Mr. Smyth, and a small part of it to the north is included in Ward No. I. It is probably so called from the fact of its having been formed by sandy accretions (*bāli*, sand).

Parts of Bāli are known by different names, *e.g.*, Rāirāyān Bazar, and (round this bazar) Tewāripārā, Mālpārā (now called Pālpārā), Borālpārā, etc. Rāirāyān Bazar is said to have been established in the days of Mughal rule by an up-country man named Alamchānd, or according to another account, by Hari Mallik, who bore the title of Rāirāyān or chief of noblemen. He not only established the bazar, which in time became the largest market in Hooghly, but also a *thākurbāri* dedicated to Rādha-Krishna. The bazar has now disappeared, but the worship continues in the shrine, which is under the charge of *mahants* or abbots. These abbots are not celibates but married men, and the succession passes to their lineal descendants as in the case of ordinary Hindus.

Close to the temple of Rādhā-Krishna is the *Bara ākhrā* or religious meeting place, which has a subsidiary *ākhrā* at Khāmārpārā, the southernmost part of Bānsberiā adjoining Shāhganj. The *Bara ākhrā* is ascribed to Chaturdās Bābāji, who came to Bāli three hundred years ago, cleared the jungle and settled there; his tomb is revered by the people. A wonderful story is told of Bhikāridās, the founder of the *ākhrā* at Khāmārpārā. One morning, it is said, when the saint was cleaning his teeth, Daraf Ghāzi of Tribenī (probably a corruption of Jafar Ghāzi) came to visit him riding on a tiger. Seeing him, Bhikāridās patted the wall he was sitting on and told it to move. The wall, with the saint on it, moved forward until he came face to face with the Ghāzi. Both came down from their seats, and embraced each other. The Ghāzi acknowledged the superiority of the Hindu saint and praised him, after which each returned to his place. Thenceforth Daraf Ghāzi, from being a hater of the Hindus, became an admirer of their religion, studying Sanskrit and composing prayers in that language to the

* *Selections from the Calcutta Gazettes*, 5th August 1784, I, 22-3, 3rd September 1799, Vol. III.

goddess Ganges. If Daraf Ghāzi is identical with Jafar Khān, who built a mosque at Tribenī in 1298 and a *madrasa* in 1313, then Bhikāridās of the legend goes back to the beginning of the 14th century. His *ākhrā* came into the hands of the abbot of *Bara-ākhrā* by the terms of a will.

In Borālpārā, east of the Rāirāyān's Bazar, resided, according to tradition, Gaurī Sen, whose name is preserved in a proverb referring to his liberality. A Subarnabanik by caste, he is said to have lived about three hundred years ago, beginning life as a trader on a small scale. One of his chief customers was one Bhairab Chandra Dutt, a Kāyasth of Mednisankarpur, a place not yet identified. On one occasion Gaurī Sen sent him seven boats loaded with zinc. It so happened that an old *sādhu* or saint was proceeding on a pilgrimage to the south on one of these boats. When the boats came to their destination, Bhairab Dutt found to his surprise that the cargo was not zinc, but pure silver, and magnanimously sent back the boats, with their cargo intact, to Gaurī Sen. Just before the arrival of the boats at Hooghly, Gaurī Sen dreamt that the god Mahādeva appeared before him, informed him of the strange transmutation of the metal, and directed him to build a temple. The next day the seven boats arrived laden with silver, and Gaurī Sen found himself immensely rich. He built the temple of Siva as directed by the god, and spent his wealth in relieving the poor and the needy. Hence the proverb "*Lage tākā, dete Gaurī Sen*," *i.e.*, "If you want money, Gaurī Sen will give it." His descendants who are in reduced circumstances, still keep up the worship of Siva in the temple.

Besides these religious institutions, Bāli has an *atith-sālā* or alms-house for ascetics built by Nanda Lāl Khetri. On the river bank are several *ghāts*, one of which has recently been built by Piyāri Bībī of the family of Nanda Lāl, and a burning *ghāt* built by the Pāl family of Mālpārā.

Hooghly proper lies south-east of Bāli and is separated from it by a large drain. It used to be the most densley populated part of the municipality, and besides a large bazar contained the Civil and Criminal Courts and all the offices. In 1896 the Courts and offices, and in 1909 the office of the Inspector of Schools, were removed to Chinsura, and now the only public institutions are the branch school, the normal school, and a police outpost opened in 1907 at Chak Bazar (Hooghly Chauk). The transfer of the offices and courts has affected the prosperity of Hooghly, which has still further waned owing to the ravages of malarial fever and the decline in trade. Hooghly proper.

The Strand Road runs close to the river bank, and to the west of it is nearly the whole of Hooghly town: here are several quarters having names reminiscent of the Mughal occupation, such as Turānigarh and Shaistābād, and further west Sonātuli, Kabāsdāngā, Alipur, etc. Mughalpārā, which lies across the present Chakbazar road, was occupied by Irāni Mogul traders, and is so named in contradistinction to Turānigarh. On the east of the Strand Road there are only the Magistrate's house and the Imāmbāra, a garden and the tomb of Muhammad Mohsin, and a bazar; this quarter is called Imāmbazar. There is a fine *ghāt* on the river bank near the schools called Smyth's Ghāt after Mr. D. C. Smyth, Judge Magistrate of Hooghly, which was built in 1829 by private subscription.

The Imāmbāra. The Imāmbāra is an imposing edifice constructed out of funds which had accumulated from an endowment left by a pious and wealthy Muhammadan, Hāji Muhammad Mohsin. By a deed, dated 30th April 1806, he created a trust and directed that the proceeds of his large property should be divided into nine equal shares. Three shares were to be applied to religious celebrations, festivals, and the repairs of the Imāmbāra buildings and cemetery; four shares were assigned to the expenses of the establishment and pensions, and two shares to the two trustees appointed as *Mutawāllis.* On account of the mismanagement of the then trustees Government stepped in, dismissed them in 1818 and took over charge of the property. During the long litigation which ensued between Government and the dismissed *Mutawāllis* (1818 to 1835), a large surplus accumulated, which amounted to 8½ lakhs in 1835. This surplus was devoted to the establishment of the Hooghly College, and to the construction of the present Imāmbāra buildings with a masonry revetment on the river bank. The revetment cost about Rs. 60,000, and the Imāmbāra buildings Rs. 2,17,413, including a large clock procured from England, which cost Rs. 11,721. Work began in 1841 and was completed in 1861, the Imāmbāra replacing an old building said to have been erected about 1694, or, according to another account, about 1717.

The buildings extend from the Magistrate's residence on the west to the *hāt* on the east, and occupy the space between the Strand Road and the Hooghly river. The main entrance consists of a wide gate flanked by a tall tower on each side. The towers are about 80 feet high and have staircases inside leading to a gallery on the top from which an excellent view of the surrounding country for many miles can be obtained. Between them is a massive clock tower. The gate leads to a large quadrangular

courtyard paved with marble, in the centre of which is a masonry cistern stocked with gold fish and with fountains playing in it. On two sides of the quadrangle are two-storied ranges of rooms, and on the north side stands the mosque proper. Its roof is supported by slender pillars, the floor is paved with marble, and the walls are decorated with texts from the *Korān* in black and other colours. The interior is rich with inlaid marble and carvings, chandeliers and lanterns, and there is a pulpit coated with silver plates.

West of the entrance gate are rooms set aside for a *Yunāni* dispensary, beyond which is the *hamām-ghar* or Turkish bath. East of the gate runs a range of double-storied buildings, which contain the office and quarters of the *Mutawālli*. Further east is a garden containing several tombs, including those of Mīrza Sāla-ud-dīn Muhammad Khān, *Faujdār* of Hooghly, his wife, Mann Jān Khānam, his father-in-law, Agā Mutāhar, and his brother-in-law, Muhammad Mohsin himself. A pathway through the garden leads to a suite of rooms facing the river, which are now let out on hire. East of the garden, and separated from it by a drain, is an enclosed *hāt* established by Sālah-ud-din, in which a market is held every Tuesday and Saturday

The Imāmbāra is a Shiah institution, and is under the management of the *Mutawālli* or trustee. It is maintained from the grant allotted from the Mohsin Fund. One-ninth of this sum is made over to the *Mutāwalli* or trustee as his pay, and a three-ninths share (plus Rs. 750 a month) which is under the control of a committee of Muhammadan gentlemen, is devoted to the upkeep of the Imāmbāra and its religious celebrations. The present *Mutawālli*, Syed Alī Nawāb, was appointed by Government in 1908, being the fifth so appointed since 1818.

Golghāt. South of the Imāmbāra comes Golghāt or, as it is sometimes written, Gholghāt. It was so called from the fact that in the bank here there was a semi-circular cove (*gol*, circular and *ghāt*, landing stage).* This quarter of the town is traversed by the Naihāti branch of the East Indian Railway, and is connected with the other side of the Hooghly by the Jubilee Bridge, the Hooghly Ghāt station being close by.

Jubilee Bridge. The bridge, which is so called because it was opened in the Jubilee year (1887), is constructed on iron caissons, sunk below the bed of the river and filled in with brick and mortar. It is built on the cantilever system and has three spans. The central cantilever span rests on two piers in the middle of the river;

* The cove is shown in Bowrey's chart of 1688 and the pilot chart of 1703.

the second and third spans project from either bank. The two central piers are each sunk to a depth of 100 feet below mean sea-level, or 73 feet below the river bed. The height of the bridge above highest water mark is 36½ feet, so as to allow ample space beneath for the passage of river steamers and native cargo boats. Its length is 1,200 feet, consisting of two spans projecting from the banks, measuring 420 feet each, and one central span 360 feet. All heavy traffic intended for export overseas, such as coal, jute, oil seeds, wheat, &c., passes over this line to Naihāti, and thence by the Eastern Bengal State Railway and the Kānkurgāchhi loop to Kidderpore Docks south of Calcutta.

The Forts. Golghāt terminates at the district jail (built in 1816), which lies within Ward III, the drain to its north being the boundary of the ward. The Strand Road passes along the river bank in front of the jail and commands a fine view of the Hooghly.

The part of the municipality included in Ward II is historically the most interesting, as it comprised the old town of Hooghly which is mentioned in 1495 in the poem of Bipra Dās as a place on the river Bhāgīrathī at which the merchant Chānd touched. Hooghly appears originally to have been a part of the suburbs of Sātgāon, and the legends indicate that the place was then mostly covered with jungle. It rose into importance when the Portuguese began to settle here about 1570; by 1590 it had superseded Sātgāon as a port, and in 1632 it became the Mughal head-quarters on the capture of the Portuguese fort by the forces of the Bengal Nawāb. The Portuguese fort must have covered a large area, if we accept the account which states that there were several thousands of Christians in it at the time of its capture. It was bounded on one side by the river, and on the other three sides by a deep moat fed from the river; the deep drain which goes down to the river north-west of Smyth's Ghāt is probably part of this moat, and also possibly the drains south of Bandel Church and south of the railway bridge. The fort cannot now be traced with any certainty, but according to some, two low broken walls that run into the river opposite the jail gate are remnants of it. A part of the north wall, too, may probably be traced in the remains which may be seen on the east bank of the moat that bounds the Hooghly post office on the west.

In the second quarter of the 17th century the Dutch built a factory in Golghāt, and by 1651 the English had built another factory about 20 paces north of it The Dutch factory and store-houses were swept away by floods, after which they removed to Chinsura, where they built Fort Gustavus about 1656. The English also finding their factory exposed to floods, built another

a quarter mile higher up, using the old factory for storing bulky goods. The Mughal Governor lived in Hooghly proper, and a large bazar lay between. It was in this bazar that on 28th October 1686, the quarrel arose between the English soldiers and Mughal peons which compelled Charnock to fight with the Mughal Governor and, later on, to give up Hooghly as his head-quarters In this fight the old factory was burnt down. The portion south of the fort was thickly peopled, and the English are said to have burnt down four to five hundred houses during their attack on the battery and the Governor's house.*

After the war Charnock settled at Sutānuti (in August 1690), and the English factory at Golghāt was practically abandoned. The New Company ("the English Company") had its head-quarters at Golghāt for some time; but after amalgamation with the old Company, it left Golghāt for Calcutta in 1704. The Golghāt factory then gradually went out of repair. A private English merchant, called in those days an "adventurer," visited the factory towards the end of 1712 and left the following description of it:--"Golgutt, an English factory, subordinate under Calcutta, is seated in the city of Hugley on the banks of the river, it here forming itself into a Cove, being deep-water ships' riding 16 and 18 fathom not a stone's cast off shore. Being landed and ascended the bank, you enter the factory through a large gate, beautified and adorned with pillars and cornices in the Chenum work; and on the top of all is the flagstaff fixed into the brick work, whereon they hoist St. George's flag. Being entered the gate you come into a Viranda for the guard; you ascend into the house by steps, having under it two square cellars with staircases to descend. The hall is indifferent large; besides two indifferent apartments with chimneys, there are other rooms and closets in the house, the whole consisting but of one story. Behind the house is a garden, in which grows nothing but weeds, in the middle is an ugly well and at one corner upon the wall is built a round sort of a building like a sentry box, but much larger. You ascend it by a narrow Chenum staircase, which has no rails or fence to keep you from tumbling into the garden, and when entered you see nothing worth observation. Having a door, but never a window tho', it yields an excellent echo, it being contrived, as I have been informed, as a magazine for powder.

"At the end of the garden are the ruins of several apartments, the roofs being fallen in, and indeed all the out-houses are in the

* Hedges' *Diary*, Yule II, 54-55.

like condition, of which there are several. You may ascend to the top of the factory by an old wooden staircase, which is well terras'd with seats all round and a small oblong place included by itself, from whence you have a prospect of the river. To conclude, it is an old, ugly, ill-contrived edifice, wherein is not the least spark of beauty, form, or order to be seen, being seated in a dull melancholy hole enough to give one the Hippocondra by one seeing it. The Company have no factor at present that is resident here, being left in the charge of a Molly and two or three Punes, though in truth it is hardly worth looking after "* Next year (April 1713) the building was abandoned by the English, as it was found that it would cost as much to repair as it was worth, and that it would be impossible to prevent it being washed away by the river.†

When the Marāthās first invaded Bengal (1741), and forced Alī Vardi to retire from Burdwān, their ally Mīr Habib captured the Hooghly fort. Sib Rao, a Marāthā, was installed as Governor; but when Bhāskar Pandit was defeated, he evacuated the fort and retreated to Bishnupur.‡ In the war with Sirāj-ud-daula, the fort was attacked by the English both by land and water on 10th January 1757, and was captured by assault. From the descriptions given in the English records§ the Mughal fort appears to have been quadrangular in shape with a bastion at each corner. The English ships attacked it from the river side and made a breach near the south-east bastion. The main gate lay on the land side towards the south-west. The sepoys made a false attack on it between 2 and 3 A.M., and this feint drew most of the defenders there. Taking advantage of this, the sailors mounted to the breach on scaling ladders and entered the fort followed by the sepoys and English soldiers. The Mughal garrison retreated through the north-east gate. South of the fort were many houses, in one of which the sepoys and soldiers waited till the breach was effected. This house belonged to Khwājā Wājid, a rich Armenian merchant of Hooghly, who had the high-sounding title of *Fakhr-ul-tujār*, glory of merchants. The fort was demolished on 16th January, after which the English re-embarked for Calcutta.

From these accounts it seems evident that the Mughal fort lay entirely within Hooghly proper, was very much smaller than the Portuguese port, and had no moats. This conclusion is

* C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 385-6.
† Wilson, II, p. 114.
‡ *Riyāzu-s-Salātin* (transl. 1904), pp. 342-3, 347.
§ *Bengal in 1756-57*, II, 201; III, 13, 16, 18, 36, 42-3.

corroborated by Tieffenthaler's sketch of Hooghly Bander (1785), which shows a small quadrangular fort with bastions at each corner (but no gates) situated on the river bank at some distance from the Bandel ditch On the bank south of the fort two houses are shown, the larger one, which was double-storeyed, being probably Khwājā Wājid's. To the east of the fort ran a wide road lined on both sides with houses. The Mughal fort therefore occupied the site between the Imāmbāra and the Bāli drain.

In the early days of British rule the *Faujdār* Khānjahān Khān lived within the fort in a splendid house. In 1770 Stavorinus wrote .—"It (the fort) is not very defensible, and has little worthy of observation within it except the house of the Fausdar and the stables for the elephants." On account of the princely style in which he lived, his name passed into a proverb, "*Betā jeno Nawāb Khānjā Khān*," *i.e.*, "the fellow has as many airs as if he were Nawāb Khānjahān Khān." The post of *Faujdār* was abolished by Lord Cornwallis, but he was allowed to live within the fort. In 1809 the Government advanced Rs 8,000 to him for the repairs of the various buildings inside the fort, and these buildings were not given up by his family till August 1821 after his death. In 1823, a gang of prisoners was employed to pull down the fort and the *Faujdār's* residence and to level the ground; the materials were sold for Rs. 2,000. With its demolition all trace of the Mughal fort disappeared.

Hooghly was a favourite resort of well-to-do Europeans of Calcutta during the early days of British rule, and the old *Calcutta Gazette* contains several advertisements of houses to let at Hooghly, Bandel and Chinsura. These places, in fact, were looked upon as suburban retreats by the Europeans in Calcutta. Mr. and Mrs. Motte, friends of Warren Hastings and his wife Marian, used to live in Hooghly, where their residence was known as "Hooghly House"; Hastings' wife frequently came up the river to stay with them. Mrs. Grand also lived for some time at Hooghly, after her divorce, under the protection of Philip Francis, who sent her to the house of his cousin, Major Baggs.

Ward III contains Ghutiābazar, Pīpalpānti and Bābujanj. Ghutiā-bazar.
The jail is the northernmost building within this ward, and south of it comes Ghutiābazar, a crowded quarter, largely inhabited by that well-to-do caste, the Subarnabaniks. They belong to the section known as Suptagrāmiya, and are said to have migrated from Sātgāon some 300 years ago. South of Ghutiābazar is Tāmlipārā, and still futher south are Bābuganj

and Pratāppur, all lying along the river bank and west of the Strand Road, which runs between them and the river.

Pīpalpati. To the west lies the more important quarter of Pīpalpati, so called from the rows of tall *pīpal* trees that line the roads. It is traversed by the Cockerell, Pankhātuli, and Pīpalpāti roads, near the junction of which there is a police outpost; a little north of it is the municipal office. Close by are the houses of Rai Ishān Chandra Mittra Bahādur and of his brother, Bābu Mahendra Chandra Mittra, the late and present Government pleaders of Hooghly. At the southern extremity Mallik Kasim's *hāt* is held on Thursdays and Sundays. It is the largest market in the town, a large trade in rice and paddy, pulses and potatoes, being carried on. The *hāt*, which stands on the trust property of the Chinsura Imāmbāra, is probably named after Mallik Kāsim, Governor of Hooghly from 1668 to 1672, whose garden is shown just outside the town in a Dutch map of Hooghly dated 1679.*

Chinsura. Passing on to the south, one comes to Chinsura, which extends along the river from Jorāghāt (*i.e.*, double *ghāt*) southward to the ditch and boundary pillars separating French Chandernagore from British territory. The northern part of it is situated in Ward No. IV, which also contains Barabazar. Barabazar is the name given to the quarter along the river bank through which the Strand Road runs. On the river-side are a number of large houses with high revetments, not the least prominent among which is the house of the late Bhudev Chandra Mukherji, C.I.E., a noted educationist. West of the Strand Road are Armenitolā, Mughaltuli, and Feringhitolā, names reminiscent of the Mughal and early British days, when the trade of Chinsura flourished.

In the Mughaltuli lane is an Imāmbāra founded by a rich Persian merchant of Chinsura named Hāji Karbalai Muhammad, who in 1801 executed a trust deed endowing the Imāmbāra with *lākhirāj* property at Kāsimpur (now Mallik Kāsim's *hāt*) and Bānsberiā. Hāji Karbalai died in 1804, and his Imāmbāra is now in a dilapidated condition.

Armenian and Catholic Churches. In Armenitolā are the Armenian and Roman Catholic Churches. Next to the Portuguese Church at Bandel, the Armenian Church is the oldest Christian Church in Bengal, being begun in 1695 and completed in 1697 by Khwājā Joseph Margar. It is dedicated to St. John the Baptist, of whom there is a large oil-painting over the altar at the east end. The feast of St. John on 25th January is largely attended by the Armenian community of Calcutta. Attached to the church is a cemetery with many

---

* Bowrey, note 1, p. 185.

tombs, the oldest being that of Khwājā Johaness Margar, father of the founder. In his epitaph he is described in Armenian as "the famous Kharib (*i. e.*, foreigner) Khojah Johaness, the son of Margar, an Armenian from Julfa in the country of Shosh. He was a considerable merchant, honoured with the favours of Kings and of their Viceroys. He was handsome and amiable and had travelled north, south, east and west, and died suddenly at the City of Hooghly in Hindustan on the 27th November 1697, and delivered up his soul into the hands of the Angel and rested here in a foreign land seeking his home." The Roman Catholic Church was completed in 1740, chiefly from funds bequeathed by Mrs. Sebastian Shaw.

In Feringhitolā, which is probably so called after the Feringis or Portuguese, is a house of the Burdwān Rāj, and near the latter is the Hooghly thāna. West of these lies Khāgrājol, evidently so called from a *jol* or channel bordered by *khāgrā* reeds; the channel has dried up, but the adjoining lands are low and somewhat waterlogged. In Khāgrājol, Nasratullah Khān, cousin of Nawāb Khānjahān, built a large house (now in ruins) and a mosque, which is in a state of disrepair, with an inscription dated 1239 of the Bengali year (1832 A. D.). He further excavated several tanks in the neighbourhood, the largest of which goes by the name of Motijhil, probably in imitation of the well-known Motijhil of Murshidābād. Nasratullah's tomb lies in front of the mosque.

Further west lies the European cemetery on a road called after it Gorastān road. It was originally the old Dutch cemetery and was added to after the cession of the Dutch settlement in 1825. The oldest grave with a legible epitaph is that of Sir Cornelius Jonge, who died on 10th October 1743 and the oldest English grave is that of Lieutenant Dent (June 1782). Among other tombs, may be mentioned those of Nathaniel Forsyth (1816), "the first faithful and zealous Protestant minister in Chinsura," of Daniel Overbeck, the last Dutch Governor (1840), and of his son (1831), which has a pathetic epitaph stating that "his father envies him his grave." The massive tombs or mausoleums, so common in the burial grounds of the 18th century, in some instances contain coffins, which were placed in the brickwork and not buried.* European cemetery.

Ward V, at present the most important part of the municipality, extends south of the fourth ward. It contains the greater part of Chinsura proper, with Kharuābazar, Kāmārpārā and Chaumāthā, and has a large *maidān* (in front of the courts). On the river bank, east of the Strand road, lie the Free Church

* An interesting account of the cemetery will be found in "Old Chinsurah: The Garden of Sleep," *Bengal Past and Present*, January 1908.

Mission buildings and school, which are separated by a part of the *maidān* from the house of the Commissioner. The latter is a large double-storeyed house with a fine staircase, on which is a tablet bearing the date 1687 and a monogram composed of the letters O. V. C.: these letters stand for "Ostindiche Vereenigde Companie," *i.e.*, the United East India Company. The same monogram appears on the copper coinage issued by the Dutch.*

This is believed to be the house which Stavorinus described as erected by Mr. Sichterman, the Dutch Governor, about the year 1744. The gallery with a double row of pillars projecting over the water, and the "elegant terrace and balcony, which commands the finest prospect at Chinsura" have now disappeared, and so have the gardens "delightfully shady and pleasant." The "mole projecting into the river," which was mentioned by Hodges in 1780-81, can still be traced, however, as well as the remains of revetments on the river bank. To the south of the house is a long two-storeyed building, which used to be the officers' barracks; it is now occupied by the Civil Surgeon, the Superintendent of Police, and others, and some of the rooms are reserved for use as a Circuit-House and Station Club.

The Dutch Church.

Opposite the officers' barracks stands the old Dutch Church, now the English Protestant Church. It is octagonal in shape and has an altar at the north end. A Latin inscription records the fact that it was built by Sir G. Vernet, the Dutch Director, in 1767. Before this, however, in 1744, a steeple with a clock is said to have been erected by another Governor, Sichterman, thus, according to Mr. Marshman, "reminding us of the popular remark that the Frenchman invented the frill and the Englishman added the skirt." The steeple fell down in the cyclone of 5th October 1864. Round the walls are hung hatchments with the arms and epitaphs of some Dutch Governors and other officers with their wives, the oldest being that of W. A. (1662), and Rogier Van Heyningen (1665).

Hooghly College.

Further on is the Hooghly College, a fine double-storeyed building within a large compound, which is walled in on three sides and has the river on the east; the garden contains plants which have been cultivated from the time when Dr. Watt was Professor of Botany here. The building has several large rooms, in one of which there is a valuable library, and a broad flight of steps down to the river.

The college was established from the accumulated surplus of the Mohsin Fund, and, according to a stone tablet in the entrance

---

*Col. D. G. Crawford, I.M.S., *Brief History of the Hughli District* (1992). "A large slab of grey granite, which is still extant, was recently lying in the outer entrance to the racquet court, and has now been set up in the Commissioner's house. It is presumably one of the stones which were placed over the fort gates.

hall was opened on 1st August 1836. The present building was occupied in 1837, having been bought, with three *bighas* of land, between March and July of that year. It was built by M. Perron, the French General of Scindia,* who resided at Chandernagore for a year and a half (1803-05) after his surrender to Lord Lake and before his departure for Europe. Subsequently it came into the possession of Bābu Prānkissen Haldār, a zamīndār, who used to give nautches and entertainments in it, and who in 1828 contributed Rs. 13,000 for a masonry bridge over the Saraswatī at Tribenī. He was ultimately convicted of forgery and sentenced to transportation for fourteen years. The Seal family of Chinsura (now represented by Bābu Brajendra Kumār Seal, a retired District Judge), had lent him money on a mortgage of the house, and when it was sold at an auction sale of the civil court in 1834, bought it up. The Seals sold it in 1837 to Government for Rs. 20,000. The Muhammadan pupils have a hostel in a large block south of the college, while the Hindu students live in a hostel, erected in 1903, on the extreme south of the *maidān* and in several hired houses near the courts.

About half a mile from the college is the temple of Shāndeswar. This is a small temple of Siva, the Lord of Bulls, situated on the bank of the Hooghly within a walled enclosure. In this enclosure a *melā* or religious fair is held in the month of Baisākh (middle of April to middle of May). The worshippers bathe in the Ganges, and then pour Ganges water on the *linga*, which is 1½ foot high. Only Brāhmans are allowed to pour water in person, Sūdras employing Brāhman proxies on payment of a few pice. The shrine is fairly old, being mentioned in a Bengali poem of the eighteenth century.†

Chinsura barracks. Turning back and passing along the western side of the Strand Road, we come to the *maidān*, the old parade ground of the troops, which is bounded on the north by three barracks. The main barrack runs east and west for about 300 yards, and has an imposing effect. The eastern end of the upper storey forms the residence of the District Judge; with this exception, the whole building is occupied by Government offices and courts. The rooms below the Judge's residence, and a few rooms beyond it in the upper and lower floors are occupied by the office of the Commissioner; the long suite of rooms in the middle is occupied

---

* The *Calcutta Gazette* of 10th October 1805 contains an advertisement offering for sale "the house at Chinsura, now nearly finished, built by order of General Perron, leaving for Europe."

† *Sāhitya-parishad-patrikā*, Vol. VIII, p. 62.

by the criminal courts and the Collectorate and magisterial offices, the treasury being located in the lower storey; five or six rooms next to them on the upper storey are allotted to the District Board; while the suite of rooms at the western end is occupied by the civil courts and the office of the District Judge.

On the cession of Chinsura by the Dutch, this barrack was constructed in order to accommodate troops on first landing. Two tablets affixed to the middle of the upper storey on the south and the north walls give some details of its construction. That on the south records that it was begun in January 1827 by Lieutenant J. A. C. Crommelin, Executive Engineer, and was completed in December 1829 by Captain William Bell, Artillery Executive Officer; while that on the north (in Bengali) mentions the names of the masons, Rāmhari S rkār and Sheikh Tanu Dafadār. This building was occupied by the troops until 1871, when all the barracks were vacated by the Military Department.

In the north-east corner, at right angles to the main building, is another barrack that runs north and south nearly parallel to the river and the Strand Road. It formed part of the Dutch barracks, and is the oldest of all the barracks. It is a two-storeyed building and has two racquet courts at the north end. It was occupied for some time by the post office and the Hindu hostel, but since 1901 it has been occupied by a company of the Military Police.

At the north end of the court compound there are several other buildings, one of which, near the racquet courts, accommodates a club for Indian officers and others, which is named after Mr. F. W. Duke, I.C.S., C.S.I., sometime District Magistrate of Hooghly. To the west of this, beyond the Cutcherry Road, comes a block of buildings, containing the Imāmbāra hospital, and the Lady Dufferin Female Hospital. Close to the Civil Courts at the western end of the compound is the Bar Library. South of the main barrack is a fine tank reserved for drinking water. West of the Court compound is another barrack which was originally a hospital for the troops and is now occupied by the police and the police offices. To the west of the police barrack is Kharuā Bazar, probably so called from the large quantity of straw (*khar*) that used to be sold there; this is now the most important bazar in the town. Opposite the police office is the Free Mission Church and girls' school.

Beyond the *maidān* are Kāmārpārā (on the west) and Chaumāthā (on the south), two quarters inhabited by *bhodra lok*, including several Subarnabanik families, such as Seals, Mandals,

Lāhās and Malliks. Among other, may be mentioned the Shom family and the family of the Calcutta merchants, Biswanāth Lāhā and Co.

At the extreme western boundary of this ward, near the 25th mile of the Grand Trunk Road, is a large Dutch tomb. It is an arched chamber, 15 feet high, with a dome and steeple. Round the dome are inscribed in large letters the name and the date of death, viz., Susanah Anna Maria Yeates, who died on 12th May 1809. She bequeathed Rs. 4,000 as a trust fund, the interest of which was to be expended on the maintenance of her tomb, and the surplus, if any, given to the Chinsura Poor Fund. She also bequeathed a garden, named Ayeshā Bāg, to be used as a burial ground for Europeans.

Old Chinsura.

The Dutch occupied Chinsura from 1656 to 1725. In 1656 they founded Fort Gustavus, of which the following description is given by Schouten, who visited Chinsura in 1665. "There is nothing in it (Hooghly) more magnificent than the Dutch factory. It was built on a great space at the distance of a musket shot from the Ganges, for fear that, if it were nearer, some inundation of the waters of this river might endanger it, or cause it to fall. It has, indeed, more the appearance of a large castle than of a factory of merchants. The walls are high and built of stone, and the fortifications are also covered with stone. They are furnished with cannon, and the factory is surrounded by ditches full of water. It is large and spacious. There are many rooms to accommodate the Director, the other officers who compose the Council, and all the people of the Company. There are large shops built of stone, where goods that are bought in the country, and those that our vessels bring there, are placed."

This account is confirmed by the English Agent, Streynsham Master, who visited Chinsura on 21st November 1676 and wrote :—" Visited the Dutch at their factory, which is very large and well-built, with two quadrangles. The Directore was very obliging and showed us the new-built warehouses, which are three very large, that make one side of one of the quadrangles next to the Riverside. They are excellently well-timbered, which was all brought from the Coast. Alsoe he showed us other accommodations of their Factory, their gardens which are very spatious well kept with Tarrass walks and full (of) Lettice and good herbage ; and adjoyneing to their Factory they have offices for all things needful to them, as a Carpenters Yard with stores of good Timber brought from Batavia, a Cooper's yard where they make many casks for the Pork, which they kill and salt up downe the river, a Smiths forge,

a Grannary and apartment for a great many weavers, where they have sett up Loomes for the weaving of saile cloth, and a foild to make ropes in." *

The sketch plan† of Chinsura (1721) given in Du Bois' "Lives of the Governors-General of the Dutch East India Company" shows a quadrangular fort with two gates, one to the north and the other to the east on the riverside. Within the fort were various offices, houses of officers, tanks and gardens. Outside the fort a bazar lay to the north-east, the flagstaff to the east on the river bank, gardens to the south and south-west, and a cemetery to the north-west.†

When Stavorinus visited Chinsura (1770), the place had undergone many changes. The fort, an oblong in shape, 650 feet by 325 feet, had three gates, one by the river, another to the north, and the third to the south leading to the Company's garden, "in which there is neither a bush nor a blade of grass." The stone walls were about 15 feet high, but in a ruinous state. The cemetery to the west had been levelled and was occupied by a powder magazine, a new burial ground (the present European cemetery) being opened in another part of the town. In the south-east corner the Governor's house (the present Commissioner's house) and the Church (the present Protestant Church) had been built. Southwards, at a distance of more than a quarter of an hour's walk, Mr. Vernet had built a house for freemasons, called Concordia.

When the British took possession in 1825, the Dutch were found to have been paying the Mughal Government rent for the area of the fort (about 65 *bighās*), Chinsura and Mirzāpur. Not long afterwards, the stones of the fort wall were utilized to metal the town roads; and with the exception of the Dutch barrack and the present Commissioner's house, all the buildings inside the fort were dismantled to make room for the new barracks. The Church and the two cemeteries were made over to the Lord Bishop of Calcutta. Up to that time there was at every outlet of the town a gate guarded by police officers, whose duty it was to realize custom duties and to prevent the desertion of European sailors belonging to the Dutch ships. The tolls were abolished, but a place on the road near Tāldāngā towards Chandernagore is still known as *tolā-phatak* (toll-gate). At present, except for the Commissioner's house, the cemetery, the barracks, and some drains, no memorial of the Dutch rule is visible.

* Bowrey, p. 169, note 1.

† It forms the frontispiece of Toynbee's *Sketch* of the Administration of Hooghly District.

Ward VI, south of the fifth ward, contains the British portion of Chandernagore, which is separated from the French portion by some roads and a lane. It is sparsely populated, and contains a police outpost. Along the river bank a long *char* has formed, which is Khās Mahāl property; it is farmed out to lessees, part of it being used for brick-fields. The *char* appears to be of some age, *babul* and other trees growing on it; but during the last two years (1908-09) it has rapidly cut away, and almost all the *babul* trees have fallen into the river. Nand Kumār was present at a parade of the British army held by Clive on the Chandernagore plain to the northward of ' Taldangy garden " on 23rd April 1757.* British Chandernagore.

The town appears to be decadent. Its population fell from 34,761 in 1872 to 29,383 in 1901, and was 28,916 in 1911; during the decade ending in 1902, the death-rate (50·42 per mille) nearly doubled the birth-rate (28·42). Very little of its old trade has survived, and it has no mills or factories. Hooghly suffers much from fever, and the inhabitants of Chinsura from cholera and bowel-complaints. A scheme for the establishment of water-works at a cost of about 4 lakhs has been mooted, but its initiation depends on the funds the municipality can provide. It may be added that Hooghly-Chinsura and French Chandernagore are the only places in Bengal proper outside Calcutta where plague has broken out in epidemic form. From January to May 1905, there were 254 cases, with 204 deaths, in Hooghly-Chinsura, and 223 cases, with 174 deaths, in French Chandernagore.† Present condition.

Hooghly Subdivision.—The headquarters subdivision of the district lying between 22° 52′ and 23° 14′ north latitude and between 87° 58′ and 88° 30′ east longitude. It extends over the whole of the north of the district, and with an area of 442 square miles, it is the largest of the subdivisions. The land, which has been formed by the silt deposits of the Hooghly on the east and the Dāmodar on the west, is flat and alluvial, but has a slight rise towards the north and north-west. It is intersected by numerous channels and creeks, and there are numerous depressions, the remains of former river channels. Hence it is water-logged, and all the thānas are very malarious, the death-rate exceeding the birth-rate considerably. In the sixties and seventies of the 19th century Burdwān fever raged, carrying away a very large proportion—estimated at one third to more than a half—of the population. Though this fever has disappeared, the population has not increased, numbering 308,217 in 1881 and 308,715 in

* *Bengal in 1756-57*, II, p. 364.

† Indian Medical Gazette, October 1905.

1901. The land is, however, fertile and yields abundant crops of paddy (rice), pulses, potatoes, vegetables and jute.

Inchurā.—A village in Balāgarh thāna in the noth-east of the Hooghly subdivision. It contains an outpost, is the junction of several roads and contains a District Board bungalow. It is, however, somewhat difficult of access, as the roads are mostly fair-weather tracks; the Panduā-Kālnā road is, however, a good metalled road. The old road from Tribenī to Kālnā and thence to Murshidābād passed by this village, and it is shown in Rennell's Atlas with the flag mark of a police station.

Janāi.—A large village in thāna Chandītalā of the Serampore subdivision, situated on the right bank of the old Saraswatī. It is connected with the Chandītalā station on the Howrah-Sheakhālā Light Railway by a short branch line 2½ miles long. The village contains the residence of the zamīndār family of Mukherjis, once an influential family, but now in reduced circumstances owing to partition and litigation. There is a High English School here, and the place has a local reputation for a species of sweetmeats called *manoharā*. About a mile off is Bakshā, also on the right bank of the Saraswatī, which contains a Navaratna temple of Raghunāth built in 1793 A. D., and a group of twelve temples, named Isāneswar, built in 1780 by Bhawānī Charan Mitra.* Adjoining the group of temples is a fine tank with a broad *ghāt*. A *melā* is held here annually on the last day of the Bengali year in April.

Khānākul.—A large village in the Arāmbāgh subdivision, situated on the right bank of the Kānā Dwārakeswar, in 22° 43′ N. and 87° 52′ E. It is the headquarters of a police station, and contains an out-door dispensary and High English school. It may be reached from Māyāpur (on the Old Benares road) by the Māyāpur-Jagatpur road, a *kutcha* fair-weather road; but the easiest route is (1) by the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway from Howrah to Kolā (on the Rūpnārāyan); (2) by steamer on the Rūpnārāyan to Rānīchak; and (3) by boat from Rānīchak to Khānākul. On account of the Beguā breach, a large quantity of the Dāmodar water has been passing through the lower part of the Kānā Dwārakeswar of late years and has deepened this part of the channel. It is now navigable by boats of considerable size for several miles beyond Khānākul; and a large temple of Ghanteswar Siva, standing on the river bank, is in danger of being cut away by the deepened stream.

Khānākul is the centre of a considerable trade in brass-ware, inferior cotton fabrics, silk threads and cloths, rice and vegetables. The *hāt* at Khānākul is the largest in the subdivision.

---

* M. M. Chakravarti, *Bengali Temples*, J. A. S. B., 1909, pp. 144-5, fig. 6.

The manufacture of cotton and silk fabrics has long been carried on in the neighbourhood. The East India Company had large *aurungs* or factories for these textures at Khirpāi and Rādhānagar in the adjoining subdivision of Ghātāl, and we find that in 1759 Mr. Watts, Resident of "Guttaul," complained that the *gomāstās* at "Connakool" had detained some silk winders who were indebted to him.

Khānākul is inhabited by many families of the higher castes, specially Brāhmans and Kāyasths, a sure sign that it is an old place. The Brāhmans of Khānākul formed a distinct Samāj, noted for their learning and studies in grammar and astronomy. In Valentyn's map "Canncoel" and above it "Sjanabatti" are shown on the west bank of a large stream, which though not named, is evidently the Kānā Dwārakeswar, then the main channel.

Konnagar.—The southernmost part of the Serampore Municipality (*v.* Serampore).

Kotrang.—A town in the Serampore subdivision, situated in 22° 41′ N. and 88° 21′ E. Population (1901) 6,574. It lies between the Hooghly river and the East Indian Railway, with Konnagar on the north and Uttarpārā on the south. The town is small and generally unhealthy, its death-rate during the decade ending in 1902 being 42·21 per mille or more than double the birth-rate (19·77); the low-birth-rate is largely due to a considerable floating population of males, who are attracted to the town by the brick and tile making industry, for there are a number of brick-fields along the bank of the Hooghly. The Calcutta Corporation had a large brick-field here, which is now sublet to private persons; a little jute rope and string are also made by hand. The town is of modern creation, and is not shown in any old maps; but the village of Kotrang is mentioned in the poem of Bipra Dās (1495 A.D.); and one part of the town, Bhadrakālī, in a Bengali poem on Satyanārāyan Pīr (18th century). Bhadrakālī is so called from an old temple of the goddess Kālī. A religious fair is held here about the middle of January in honour of a saint named Mānik Pīr.

Krishnanagar.—A large village on the left bank of the Kānā Dāmodar, in the Serampore subdivision. It is the headquarters of a thāna and contains a station on the Chāmpādāngā branch of the Howrah-Amtā Light Railway. "Kistanagar" appears in Rennell's Atlas with a flag mark indicating a police station, and is therefore a fairly old village.

Krishnanagar.—A large village on the right bank of the Kānā Dwārakeswar in the Arāmbāgh subdivision. It lies about

two miles north of Khānākul police station, and is often distinguished from other places of the same name by the designation Khānākul-Krishnanagar. In the dry season it may be reached from the Old Benāres road by the Māyāpur-Jagatpur road; there is a District Board bungalow on this road at Gopālnagar, a mile south of Krishnanagar. The easiest way, however, is to go from Rāniīchak by boat, which brings one to Krishnanagar in 6 or 7 hours. An out-door dispensary is maintained here by the zamīndār, and there are three Sanskrit *tols*. A large temple, surrounded by a dozen smaller ones, stands on the river bank; it is dedicated to Gopīnāth, and was visited by the poet Bhārat Chandra Ray about 1751 A.D. In the village of Nāptipārā, close by, lived the ancestors of the late Bābu Bhudev Mukherji, the first Indian Inspector of Schools and for some time a member of the Legislative Council of Bengal.

Rādhānagar or Raghunāthpur immediately north of Krishnanagar, was the home of Rājā Rāmmohan Rai, the well-known reformer and founder of the Brāhmo Samāj. It is now the property and residence of his grandson, Rājā Piyāri Mohan Rāi.

Magrā.—A large village in thāna Hooghly of the Hooghly subdivision, situated in 22° 59′ N. and 88° 22′ E. on the right (south) bank of the Kānā Nadī, which is here called the Magrā Khāl. The Grand Trunk Road passes through the place, which also contains the junction station of the East Indian Railway and the Bengal Provincial Railway, the latter having two stations, Magrā and Magrāganj. The *ganj* or mart is an important one, a considerable traffic passing through it by rail, road and river. An outpost and a post office are located here; and there is a Public Works Department bungalow on the Grand Trunk Road. Cotton fabrics are manufactured by hand looms in some quantities in the neighbourhood; but the chief exports are paddy, rice, tobacco and fine sand. The latter is taken from the bed of the Kānā Nadī near Magrāganj and used for building. The river is evidently an old channel of the Dāmodar, which must once have run straight across to Tribenī. The Magrā sand-beds are nearly exhausted, and sand is now dug up all along the line of the Bengal Provincial Railway at Sultāngāchi, Dwārbāsinī Milki, etc., whence it is railed to Tribeni and exported by boat to Calcutta.

The manufacture of cotton cloths at Magrā dates back a long time, for the "Minutes of Consultations" of Fort William mention the despatch of *gumāshtas* to a large *aurung* or factory at Golagore, near Magrā. In 1755, it was reported that Rs. 38,518 had been advanced to the weavers at Golagore; and in 1767 an inspecting officer visited the *aurung* there and reported that

things were going on well. The early records of Hooghly show that the *aurung* was replaced before 1795 by a Commercial Residency at Golagore, the road from Nāyāsarāi to Burdwān *viâ* Golagore being the boundary between the area it commanded and that of Haripāl. Later, it appears from a report of the Resident in 1810 that a considerable trade had sprung up in *sun* or hemp at Golagore. The Residency is mentioned in W. Hamilton's Hindostan (1820), and was abolished about 1835. After its abolition, though the manufacture of cotton and silk declined, there was a development of trade owing to the construction of the Grand Trunk Road, which crossed the Kānā Nadī (old Dāmodar) at Magrā *en route* to Burdwān. This improvement continued until the East Indian Railway drew off the bulk of the trade to the north-west. The trade became local, and gradually dwindled. In recent years the local traffic has been considerably developed by the Bengal Provincial Railway with its Tribenī branch giving direct access to the Hooghly river; and it will presumably be further developed when the Hooghly-Kātwā line, now under construction, is opened.

In Rennell's Atlas "Moggura Gaut" is shown as connected with "Terbonee" or "Bansbaria" by a road that passed on to Burdwān. When the Grand Trunk Road was built, an iron suspension bridge was built over the Kunti Nullah at a cost of Rs. 36,000 contributed by the Burdwān Rājā in 1829; and in 1830 the portion between Hooghly and Magrā was metalled.

Māhānād (*Mahā*, great, and *nāth* lord).—A large village lying partly in thāna Panduā and partly in thāna Polbā of the Hooghly subdivision, situated a mile north of the station of the same name on the Bengal Provincial Railway. It contains a station of the Free Kirk Rural Mission, which has established an out-door dispensary and a High English school. The village also contains temples of Brahmamayī and Siva; on the Sivarātri day (February-March) a religious fair called Mahānād *Jātra* is held in Siva's temple. According to the legends of Panduā, Mahānād was conquered by the Muhammadans together with Panduā (q.v.). There is a tank here known as the *Jibankund*, where it is said that dead Hindus were restored to life again, until it was defiled by the Musalmāns throwing cow's flesh in it. Here too the remains of a high embankment from Tribenī to Mahānād, 8 miles, can still be seen, which goes by the name of *Jāmāi jāngāl* (son-in law's embankment).

Māhesh (Māhesh, a title of Siva).—A quarter of Serampore town lying between Rishrā and Ballabhpur. See Serampore.

Mandalai.—A village in thāna Panduā of the Hooghly subdivision. It is 4 miles from the Panduā railway station, and is accessible by the Panduā-Inchurā road. It contains an out-door dispensary, which provides medical relief to a malarious tract. Its cost is met from the income of a Trust Fund left by Dr. Bholānāth Bose, late Civil Medical Officer of Farīdpur, Mandalai being his wife's ancestral home. The place is commonly known as Ilsoba-Mandalai.

Mandāran.—An old place lying in thāna Goghāt of the Ārāmbāgh subdivision, 7 or 8 miles W. S.-W. of Ārāmbāgh town. The name is probably derived from *Mandār*, a name, and *abani*, tract; * but another derivation is given by Mr. Beames, viz., *manda*, bad, and *aranya*, forest.† The Burdwān-Midnapore road passes west, and the Old Nāgpur road a little north of the place. It contains the ruins of two forts, the northern one called Garh Mandāran and the southern one Bhitargarh, of which the following description is quoted from an article by Lieutenant-Colonel D. G. Crawford, I.M.S., on "Places of Historical Interest in Hughli District" published in *Bengal Past and Present* (Vol. II, pages 294-97)‡. "An earthen ramp, some ten to fifteen feet high, encloses a space of about 500 yards square, roughly quadrangular with the corners rounded off. The river Amudwara (Amodar) enters this place at the northern corner of the ramp and flows across it, passing out at a gap in the eastern side, near its south end. The south-eastern corner of the quadrangle shows a distinct bulge outwards to the south-east, the reason for which is not apparent. On the right or south-west bank of the river stand the ruins of the "inner fort" or Bhitargarh. These ruins consist of a mound some 200 yards square, and I should think 30 to 40 feet high in the centre. More or less all round this mound, but specially on the northern (river) and southern faces, may be seen traces of a wall, built of laterite blocks below, brick above. The sides of the mound are overgrown with jungle, both tree and scrub; so thick, that it is difficult to get through. The top is more open, though it also is covered with trees. The whole mound apparently consists of broken brick, more or less, but no trace of any definite building, even in ruins, is visible, except a Musalmān tomb on the highest point.

"This tomb consists of three terraces 16 paces long from north to south, 12 from east to west, and each about two feet high. They are built of old stones, and apparently have been patched

* *Bhavishyat-Purāna*, l. c., Ind., Ant. XX, p. 420.

† J. R. A. S., 1896, p. 106.

‡ See also Proc. A S. B., April 1870, pp. 115-19.

up from time to time. On the highest terrace is the tomb itself, some six feet long and three feet high. A yard from its northern end is a small brick pillar, with a niche in it for a lamp. There were many clay horses round the tomb, mostly very small coarse clay images, but one quite artistic and much larger. The space between the northern ramp and river is high grass land. The rest of the enclosure is mostly cultivated as rice fields, except its southern end, which is a swamp. Just outside the southern ramp lies a long narrow tank, which probably was once a moat. From the southern end of the outer ramp projects a second fortification, about 300 yards long from the south to north and 500 broad, with a high mound at its south-west angle; this mound consists mostly of masses of roughly cut laterite and must have been a strong bastion.

"The situation is well chosen for defence against an enemy armed only with bows and arrows or even early firearms. Even if the outer ramp were taken, the garrison of the inner fort were sure of a water-supply from a river, which does not run dry during the hot weather, washing the northern walls of the fort. The ramp of the outer fort is now only some 10 to 15 feet high, and presents an easy slope on both inner and outer sides. Cavalry could ride over it; indeed, it would now hardly check them in a gallop. But this is after the rains of a century at least, probably much longer, have acted on it. In the days when the ruin was a fortress, it was probably much higher and steeper. This fort is the scene of the story '*Durgesa Nandinī*,' by the celebrated Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, who was Subdivisional Officer of Jahānabad about 20 years ago.

"A little north of the northern ramp lie the ruins of Garh Mandāran. These consist of large mounds, 15 to 20 feet high, covering a space of about half a mile square. A poor modern village covers part of this area. On one of the mounds towards the south stands a mosque, of no particular antiquity or interest."

Historically, Mandāran is a place of much interest. In the Orissa copper plates, the king of Mandār (the old name of Mandāran) is stated to have been defeated by Chodaganga and driven to the banks of the Ganges. Various traditions connect the place with Ismāil Ghāzī, a famous general of Husain Shāh, the Sultān of Bengal, from whose time it became an important frontier station of Bengal commanding the old Pādishāhi road from Burdwān to Orissa. Madāran appears as a *Sarkār* in the *Ain-i-Akbarī*, its headquarters Haveli-i-Madāran being a large *mahāl* with a revenue of 1,727,077 *dams* (Rs. 43,127). In accounts of the wars between the Afghāns and the Mughals in Akbar's reign, it is

mentioned several times as being on the royal road to Orissa; its importance in those days is also clear from the fact that it was one of the very few places shown in the maps of Gastaldi, De Barros and Blaev. With the subjugation of the Afghāns in Orissa, its importance gradually declined; and by the second half of the 17th century it disappeared from European maps. The chief traces of its status as a frontier town now consist of the remains of its forts, and the survival of a considerable number of Musalmān *āimādārs*, holding lands rent-free or at quit-rents as a reward for military and other services.

Several quaint legends attach to the place; its old remains, and also its romantic site on the Amodar, induced Babu Bankim Chandra Chatterji to select it as the scene of one of his best-known novels, the *Durgesa-nandinī* or the Chieftain's Daughter. The following story about the headless rider of Mandāran is quoted from Blochmann's account* :—

"In days of old, Ismāil Ghāzī, a General (*sipahsālār*) of Husain Shāh of Gaur, was sent to fight the infidels of Orissā. After gaining a signal victory, Ismāil retuned from Katak to Bengal, and halted at a small place called Madāran, south-west of Burdwān. He was pleased with the surrounding country and stayed there for some time. One night, while saying his prayers in the open air, he was disturbed by a noise above his head. He looked up, and saw a long line of Devs passing eastwards to bathe in the Bhāgīratī. 'You have disturbed my prayer,' exclaimed Ismāil to the Devs, 'come down and perform the service which I shall impose upon you as a punishment.' 'We cannot interrupt our flight to the river', replied the Devs, 'but on our return we will do whatever thou commandest.' After some time the Devs came back, and presented themselves before Ismāil, who commanded them to build, at the place where he was, an immense fort, after the model of the fort of Lankā (Ceylon). The Devs at first objected, because they had never been in Lankā; but, as Ismāil remained firm, they quickly despatched one of their number to Lankā, and before morning dawned the Fort of Madāran was completed.

"But the circuit of the Fort, which the Devs had built in one night, was so great that much land belonging to Hindus had been taken away for it. Now there was a Brāhman in Brāhmangānw, half a mile north of Bhitargarh, who had some influence (*rasāi*) with Husain Shāh; and as a tank belonging to him had been taken within the new fort, he went straight to Gaur and

* Proceedings, A. S. B., April 1870, pp. 117—19.

told Husain Shāh that Ismāil prepared for a revolt. Had he not built an immense fort near the frontier of Orissa, without telling the king? This appeared convincing, and Husain Shāh sent a messenger to Madāran, to recall Ismāil to Court. Ismāil was just superintending the digging of a tank near Goghāt, about four miles east of Madāran, when the order (*farmān*) came. Hence the tank is even now-a-days called *Farmāndighi*, the Tank of the Order.

"Ismāil obeyed the call of his king; but no sooner had he arrived in Gaur, than he was executed by Husain Shāh. When the head had been severed from the body, strange to behold, the headless trunk mounted a horse that stood near, and rode off in the direction of Madāran, whilst the head flew up and followed the rider, hovering high in the air perpendicularly above the body. At night the headless rider arrived before the gate of Bhitargarh, where two of his servants stood on guard. He told them not to be afraid, and explained what had happened to him in Gaur, and that he had been innocently killed by the king. He then asked them to give him some *pān*. But this the men would not do, saying that his head was high above, and he would not be able to eat. 'Then it is not Allah's will,' exclaimed Ismāil, 'that my head should join the body'—for he would have been restored to life, if they had given him something to eat—'go therefore, my head, go back to Gaur, to be buried there.' Thereupon the head returned to Gaur the same road it had come, and the grave where it was buried there may be seen to this day.

"When the head had left, Ismāil asked the guards to open the gates. He entered the town and coming to a certain spot within the Fort, he ordered the earth to open herself, when suddenly before the eyes of all, horse and rider disappeared in the yawning abyss. The earth then closed again. These wonderful events were soon told all over the neighbourhood, and crowds of visitors came to see the hallowed spot where the martyr had dissappeared. About the same time, the Rāja of Burdwān was at warfare with the Rājah of Bardah, and the latter had made a vow that he would build a *Daryāh* or *Astānah* (tomb) for Hazrat Ismāil, should he be successful against the Burdwān Rāja. Fortune favouring him, he kept his vow and built the tomb, which is still within Bhitargarh at Madāran."

About two miles south-east of Madāran is a village named Dīnanāth. Two large gateways are visible here leading to an enclosure extending over 8 or 10 *bighās*. According to tradition, the enclosure was a military bazar on the old Orissa road. Both

the gateways have Persian inscriptions. That on the southern gateway speaks of the place being called *Mubārak Manzal* by order of Nawāb Asad Jang (Nawāb Shujā-ud-dīn of the historians) when he encamped here on his way from Orissa to Bengal in 1136H. (1723-24 A.D.); while that on the northern gateway records the erection of a *sarai* by Mutamin-ul-Mulk, (*i. e.*, Shujā-ud-dīn) in 1143 H. (1730-31 A.D.).* It was here that Shujā-ud-dīn was informed of his appointment as Nawāb of Bengal, and the gateways were apparently erected in commemoration of the good news.

Māyāpur.—A village in thāna Arāmbāgh of the Arāmbāgh subdivision. It is situated on the Old Benares road, about five miles east of Arāmbāgh town, and a mile north of the Kānā Dwārakeswar stream. The road to Jagatpur *viâ* Khānākul starts from this place, at which a mud-walled thatched hut does duty as a District Board bungalow. It is an old village, mentioned in the *Chandī* of Kavikankan (*circa* 1600 A.D.) as the headquarters of a *aihidār* or village-owner, named Mahmūd Sharif. In the early British days a considerable quantity of silk cloth was manufactured here; but it is now a decadent village, having suffered greatly from the epidemics of Burdwān fever.

Mohsin Fund.—An endowment fund created by Hāji Muhammad Mohsin, who inherited the large property of his step-sister, the widow of Salāh-ud-dīn, *Faujdār* of Hooghly. In 1806 he executed a *tauliatnāma*, or deed of appropriation of his property, in which it was stated that in the testator's family, from generation to generation, certain charges had been incurred and usages observed in connection with the celebration of religious rites and festivals, and that, as he had no children by whom the performance of these pious duties could be performed, he desired to make provision for their continued discharge. He, therefore, made over specified property to two managers, with instructions that they should divide the net income into nine equal shares, two of which they should keep for their own use, three they should devote to the expenses of celebrating religious festivals and executing repairs in the Hooghly Imāmbāra and burial-ground, while the remaining four shares should be spent in paying salaries and pensions, according to a list attached. The bequest included the following properties:—the zamīndāri of *pargana* Kismat Saiyadpur and Sobnāli in Khulnā and Jessore, the Imāmbāra building, the Imāmbāra bazar and *hāt*, and the furniture of the Imāmbāra at Hooghly.

* J. A. S. B., 1870, pp. 302-03.

It appears from the proceedings of the Vice-President in Council, Persian Department, dated the 8th December 1826, and from the correspondence generally, that these salaries and pensions were payable to the officers and servants of the Imāmbāra, so that the whole endowment, as far as its purpose was specified, was for the support of that religious institution, of the ceremonies performed in it, and of the persons employed in it. The founder added the provision that "the managers after me will exercise their discretion and authority either to continue or discontinue them (the allowances and pensions) as they may think proper, and I have made over the management generally to them." No specific direction, however, was given as to what use should be made of any savings which might accrue from the discontinuance of salaries or pensions under the power given by this last clause, the matter being thus left to the discretion of the managers. A year before the execution of this deed, a suit had been instituted against Hāji Muhammad Mohsin by Mīrzā Bundah Ulla, claiming, under a pretended will, the lands which the former subsequently constituted an endowment. This suit was prosecuted from court to court up to the Privy Council, and lasted some 30 years, during the whole of which period it continued to be uncertain whether the endowment was valid or not.

Hāji Muhammad Mohsin died in 1812, and the managers whom he had appointed seem immediately to have entered upon a course of mismanagement and embezzlement. According to the finding of the Court of Sadar Dīwāni Adālat, the proper objects of the endowment were neglected, the Government revenue fell into arrears, while the income was spent on quarrels between the managers, bribes to the police and *āmins*, and gifts to the managers' relatives. Moreover, in order to increase their own profits at the expense of the trust, they forged a perpetual lease in their own favour and that of their relatives, purporting to have been executed by Hāji Muhammad Mohsin before the deed of foundation. The Board of Revenue interfered for the better government of the endowment under Regulation XIX of 1810, at first associating a Superintendent with the managers, then laying down rules for their control, and finally, in 1817, as these milder measures had only made matters worse, dismissing the managers altogether. As the relatives of the latter were implicated with them in the frauds committed, a Government servant was appointed to administer the endowment under the orders of the Board and Local Agents. From this time the institution has been practically controlled by Government.

The Board of Revenue in 1817 founded a *madrasa* at an annual cost of Rs. 6,000 payable out of the funds of the endowment. But the leading feature in the first 20 years of Government management, was the growth of a considerable fund vested in Government securities. In 1821 the property was settled in *patnī* tenures, that is to say, tenures subject to a quit-rent fixed in perpetuity, and about six lakhs of rupees were received on this account. As, however, the suit questioning the validity of the title was then pending in the Privy Council, it was made a condition that if that case were lost, and the new owner refused to confirm the *patnīs*, the purchase-money should be returned with interest. To meet this possible charge, the proceeds of the *patnī* sale were invested in Government securities, and, the interest being added as it accrued to the original principal, a capital sum of about ten lakhs of rupees was accumulated.

In 1835, shortly after the law suits terminated, it was decided by the Government of India that three-ninths of the income from the zamīndāri should be assigned permanently for the current expenses of the Imāmbāra, &c. Of the two-ninths of the income assigned to the *mutawāllis*, one-ninth was assigned to the agent or *mutawālli* appointed by Government, and the remaining one-ninth was to be available for general purposes of a beneficent nature. The four-ninths share of the zamīndāri income appropriated by Hāji Muhammad Mohsin to pensions and establishments was to remain liable to those charges, but when they lapsed, the income was to be added to the surplus fund appropriable to general purposes. There thus remained at the disposal of Government for general purposes of a beneficent nature (1) one-ninth of the annual income from the zamīndāri; (2) the lapsed pensions, &c.; and (3) the entire amount accruing from the interest of the accumulated fund invested in Government promissory notes. It was decided that, after setting apart from this last-mentioned fund such an amount as might be necessary to provide appropriate buildings, including the charge of rebuilding or repairing the Imāmbāra and other religious edifices, if it should be found necessary to renew them, the remainder should be considered as a Trust Fund, the interest of which, with other items specified, might be "appropriated to the purpose of education by the formation of a collegiate institution imparting instruction of all kinds in the higher departments of education."

After the passing of Act XX of 1863 a committee was appointed, under section 7 of that enactment, for the supervision of the endowment assigned for religious uses. This Committee

controls the expenditure of a contribution equal to three-ninths of the income directly derived from the original estate in the form of rents and an allowance of Rs. 750 a month in respect of the charge for establishment to be borne by the four-ninths share. The manager, who now deals only with the religious assignment, having no concern with the property generally, receives one-ninth. The remainder of the estate, including the whole of the interest on the accumulation, is held to be at the disposal of Government as successor to the managers appointed by the founder.

This fund was originally applied to the foundation and support of the Hooghly College, which was open to members of all religious communities. To this arrangement the objection was raised that an institution almost exclusively frequented by Hindus was not the most suitable recipient of the income of a distinctively Muhammadan endowment. Accordingly the Government of Bengal, by a resolution dated 29th July 1873, decided that the fund should be used exclusively for the promotion of education among Muhammadans, the Hooghly College being maintained from other sources. It has since then been devoted with great discretion, and with the best results, to assisting the progress of Muhammadan education throughout Bengal by various means, such as the payment of a part of the fees of Muhammadan students at the University and at zilla schools, the appointment of Persian teachers at the latter, the foundation of scholarships and hostels, etc.

According to the Report of the Muhammadan Educational Endowments Committee (1888), from which the above account has been compiled, "the history of the Mohsin Fund may be quoted with much effect as an instance of the benefit which may accrue from bold and uncompromising action in dealing with endowments. The original object of the foundation, the Imāmbāra at Hooghly, has been rebuilt, and is a handsome edifice, where the traditional ceremonies are maintained with a degree of splendour which more than fulfils the main desire of the founder that the devotional practices of his family should not perish with his race. And the surplus income, small as it is compared with the work to be done among Muhammadans in Bengal generally, is so applied as to be of the greatest use, aiding thousands in obtaining an education which they might otherwise be unable to secure. It must, however, be owned that it would be impossible to treat all endowments with the freedom exercised in the case of Mohsin's Imāmbāra, as to which Government has acted with an eye only to utility, applying the surplus of a religious and local foundation at first on the

appointed spot to secular purposes without distinction of creed, and now over all Bengal without reference to any limit of place. This wide discretion has never been claimed for the ruling power as such, and was used in this case by Government in the assumed capacity of *mutawālli* or manager of the trust."

Muhammad Amīnpur.—A large estate in the Serampore subdivision consisting of about 350 *mauzas*. Its area is 61,807 acres and its rent-roll is Rs. 1,87,743, the land revenue being Rs. 80,112. The estate is so called after Muhammad Amīnpur, a small village in the Kālnā subdivision of Burdwān. Tradition relates that this village was founded by one Muhammad Amīn, an *āmīn* under Shāh Shujā. After his death, the village, having fallen into arrears of revenue, was acquired by the ancestor of the Sheorāphuli and Bānsberiā zamīndārs, who gave the name Muhammad Amīnpur to the estate which he owned. This estate had been formed before 1728, the year of the land revenue settlement of Nawāb Shujā-ud-dīn, and, on partition, passed into the hands of the Sheorāphuli Rāj. During the time of Rājā Purna Chandra, the estate was sold and purchased by the Rājā of Dighāpatiā and by one Lakshmī Prasād, whose share was subsequently bought by Mahārājā Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore. His son and heir, Mahārājā Sir Prodyot Kumār Tagore, is now in possession of the greater part of the estate, and the remainder is held by the Rājā of Dighāpatiā. The history of this estate under the Mughal rule and during the early administration of the British will be found in the chapter dealing with Land Revenue Administration.

Nālikul—A village in thāna Haripāl of the Serampore subdivision. There is a station here on the Tārakeswar branch of the East Indian Railway, and the village is also connected with the Haripāl thāna by a short road, 4 miles long. Formerly it was a place of some importance, being shown in Rennell's Atlas, plate VII, as Nallycure with the flag mark of a police station and as the junction of several roads.

Nayāsārai (*Nayā*, new and *sarāi*, inn).—A village in thāna Balāgarh of the Hooghly subdivision. It is situated at the outfall of the Magrā Khāl into the Hooghly river, and is about 2 miles north of Tribenī on the Guptipārā road, which is here carried over the Magrā Khāl by a suspension bridge. It was a place of considerable importance in old days, as the Magrā Khāl formed the main channel of the Dāmodar, and the line of traffic to Burdwān lay through Nayāsarai. The old road to Nadiā and Murshidābād also passed through it; and mention is made of Nawāb Sirāj-ud-daula halting here on the 19th January 1757 when he was marching up to recover Hooghly, and of Clive's

arrival on the 13th June *en route* to Plassey.* Stavorinus visited the "channel of Niasserai" on 27th January 1770 and described the country as "pleasant plains of arable and pasture land, intermixed with groves of cocoanut, *suri*, mango and other trees. The sugarcane was likewise cultivated in many places and flourished luxuriantly.†"

Panduā. – A large village in the Hooghly subdivision, situated in 25° 5′ N. and 88° 17′ E. It is 14 miles north-west of Hooghly town (Keotā) by the Grand Trunk Road, which passes through it, and can be easily reached from Hooghly in an hour by the East Indian Railway, which has a station here; it is further connected with Kālnā in Burdwān district by a *pucka* road *viâ* Inchurā. The village is the headquarters of a police thāna and of an Union Committee; and it contains a post office, a sub-registry office, and a Public Works Department bungalow about a mile off from the railway station. It is the chief centre of the Sunni Musalmāns in the district, and is inhabited by many Ashrāf or respectable families, including a number of *aimādārs*, *i. e.*, holders of land granted in reward for service. In the early British period, when *Kāzis* used to be appointed for assisting in the administration of justice, a considerable number were recruited from Panduā; the post of *Kāzi-ul-Kazzat* or Chief Kāzi was hereditary for some time in a Panduā family. Latterly some of them have been appointed Deputy Magistrates, Sub-Registrars, etc. These Ashrāf families are said to be descended from Musalmān officers and soldiers who settled here in the pre-Mughal days. A large fair is held on the 1st Māgh (middle of January) and another on the 1st Baisākh (middle of April). The former is the more important, and is attended by about 10,000 people, mostly Musalmāns. The village is situated on a dead stream, the Kāsai, and was formerly more populous, but it was decimated by Burdwān fever, which first appeared here in July 1862. Within a decade the place was ruined, 5,222 persons dying out of a total population of 6,961.

From an antiquarian point of view, Panduā is one of the most interesting places in the district. The chief remains of antiquity are a tower, two mosques, a tomb, and two tanks. The most noticeable of these remains is the tower, which stands about a hundred yards east of the fourth furlong of the 42nd mile of the Grand Trunk Road. It is round and has five storeys, each lessening in diameter from 60 feet at the base to 15 feet at the top.

---

* *Bengal in 1756-57*, Hill, II, 110, 175; III, 65.

† *Travels*, I, p. 129.

The outer face is ornamented with convex fluting, and the inside walls are enamelled. In the centre of the building is a circular staircase leading to the top, and at the base of each storey is a doorway leading to a narrow terrace running all round the building. The total height of the tower, including the pinnacle, used to be 125 feet, but the topmost portion fell down in the earthquake of 1885. In 1907 the tower was repaired at the cost of Government, the fifth storey (about 20 feet high) with a dome and pinnacle being rebuilt. The tower is now 127 feet high and has been replastered and whitewashed. The loopholes in the outer wall having been cleared, and the inside staircase rebuilt, the ascent to the top is easy.

The object with which the tower was built is not clear. Popularly, it is believed to be a *muazzin* tower, from the top of which the faithful were called to prayer; and according to Musalmān traditions it was erected by Shāh Sufi-ud-dīn after he gained a victory over the local Hindu chief. No inscription, however, has been found in the tower itself. Tall towers of a similar kind are found in various parts of India, *e.g.*, the Firozā Minār in Gaur, which is also five-storeyed and has a base diameter of about 20 feet and a height of about 90 feet, and the ruined tower at Mināsarāi, on the west bank of the Mahánandā opposite old Mālda, which has nearly the same basement diameter and the same height.* The Kutb Minār of Delhi, with a basement diameter of $47\frac{1}{4}$ feet and a height (excluding the capital) of 238 feet, is still better known.† In these towers the ratio between the diameter and the height is about 1 to $4\frac{1}{4}$; while in the Panduā tower the height is reduced to less than half, making the ratio about 1 to $2\frac{1}{10}$. In spite of this difference, it may be conjectured that they are of the same character. According to some, they are imitations of Hindu *Jaya-stambhas* or victory-pillars, a theory suggested by the local traditions.

About 175 feet west of the tower stands a ruined mosque, which was in much better preservation 30 years ago. It is a long structure, rather low in height inside. The roof, now more or less dismantled, had numerous low domes, of which 63 were counted by Blochmann. Its roof rested on high pointed arches, supported by two rows of 21 pillars, each 6 feet high. The pillars are of basalt, with several horizontal bands, in various patterns; about half of them have shafts ornamented in Hindu fashion (not Buddhistic, as Blochmann conjectured) with

* *Archæological Survey of India*, Vol. XV, pp. 59, 79.

† A. S. R. Vol., I, p. 295.

garlands and pendant bells. The mosque walls and arches are made of small light-red bricks. The inner western wall is diversified with several low niches. The niches have quatrefoil arches and are finely ornamented on the sides with trellised net-work, with diamond patterns below the arches and with a rosette on each side above them. In the north-west corner of the mosque is a high platform of solid masonry with a small room on top, which is said to have served Shāh Suti ss a *Chillāh-khānah, i.e.*, a room used by hermits for a 40 days' 'retreat'. A few unfinished oblong pillars of black basalt lie about. No inscription has been found in the mosque. From its low height, thin bricks, numerous domes, and Hindu ornamentation, the mosque appears architecturally to belong to the early Pathān period.* The basalt slates were probably brought from the Rājmahāl Hills by water. The ruins have now been cleared by Government, but no restoration has been attempted.

South of the tower, on the opposite side of the Grand Trunk Road, is the *āstānah* or tomb of Shāh Sufi-ud-dīn, a small white-washed structure, which is kept in repair by subscriptions raised by the Muhammadans. It has no inscription. Several fairs are held near the *āstānah,* to which many people come and present offerings in the hope that their desires will be fulfilled.

West of this tomb is another ruined mosque. Its walls are ornamented with patterns, partly Hindu and partly Muhammadan. On the outside are three basalt tablets having Arabic inscriptions in large Tughrā characters; they consist of verses from the Korān with blessings on the Prophet. Inside, on the central tablet high above the ground, is another Arabic inscription. It records the erection of the mosque by Ulugh Majlis-i-Azam in the reign of Yusuf Shāh, dated 882H. (1477 A. D.).* The characters of this inscription, though in Tughrā, differ from the earlier inscriptions of Tribenī in having many round strokes, which bring them nearer to the Nastalik characters of Akbar's time. There is a short inscription in this mosque stating, curiously enough, that it was repaired by a Hindu named Lāl Kunwar Nāth in 1177H. (1763 A.D.). This shows that the *dargāh* was venerated not only by Musalmāns, but also by Hindus.

South of the tomb is a fine tank callad *Rauzah pokhar*. Another large and deep tank in the north of Panduā is dedicated to the saint, and is called *Pīr pokhar*. A large alligator lives in it, which, when called by the *fakīr* in charge with the words 'Kafer Khān Miyan' or simply 'Miyan', comes to the bank for

* M. M. Chakravarti, *Pre-Mughal Mosques of Bengal, J. A. S. B., 1910,* pp. 24, 26.

food. Hindus as well as Musalmāns sacrifice fowls to it in fulfilment of vows. There is also a modern mosque called the Kutb Sāhib mosque. It has a Persian inscription that records its construction by Fath Khān, an Afghān, in the 9th year of the Emperor Muhammad Shāh's reign, *i.e.*, 1140H. (1727-28 A.D).

The town is said to have been fortified by a wall and a trench, but little of them now remains except a *bāndh* to the north. Various legends are told about the Musalmān occupation of the place. The version given by Blochmann is quoted below with his remarks:- "Six hundred years ago, when the Panduah Rājah reigned over the district, Shāh Safiuddīn lived at Panduah. The Rājah was a powerful man, and resided at Mahānāth, a village not far from Panduah. Shāh Safi was a man of illustrious descent. His father, Barkhurdār, was a noble of the Court of Delhī, and had married a sister of the Emperor Fīrūz Shāh. Once a feast was given in Panduah to celebrate the circumcision of a boy, and a cow had been killed on the occasion. This sacrilege was reported to the Panduah Rājah, who had the child killed. Safi then went to Delhī, complained to his uncle, the Emperor, and asked him to give him a sufficient number of troops to punish the Rājah. His request was granted; but as the expedition was a religious war, Safi before setting out for Bengal, went to Pānīpat-Karnāl to ask the blessing of Bū Alī Qalandar, a renowned saint. The blessing was not withheld, and the saint assured Safi that he had received the glad tidings of victory from Heaven.

"Safi now moved to Panduah. In his army there were also two other men of renown, Zafar Khān-i-Ghāzī, whose shrine is at Tribenī, north of Hūglī, and Bahrām Saqqā, who had imposed upon himself the task of serving as Bhīshtī (*saqqā*) in a war against infidels. His shrine is at Burdwān. But it was a difficult matter to crush the power of the Rājah; for near his residence at Mahānāth he had a tank, the waters of which possessed miraculous powers; and whenever a Hindu had been killed, the Panduah Rājah threw the dead body into the tank, and life and health were immediately restored. Safi soon saw that his efforts would be fruitless, unless the restorative power of the tank was first broken. This was at last accomplished by some *faqīrs* who had attached themselves to his expedition. They killed a cow, and managed to throw the liver into the tank, when all at once the Devs, upon whose presence the virtue of the water depended, went away. The Rājah was now easily defeated, and his power completely broken. The old temple in Panduah was also destroyed, and the present mosque was built with its materials.

The large tower was used as a Manārah for the call to prayer, and every Hindu was driven out of the town.

"Safi soon after continued his wars with the infidels, and was at last killed in a fight. His children buried him at Panduah, and erected the vault, which, together with his mosque, still exists. His descendants increased so rapidly, that Panduah soon became a large place. The fame also of the nobility of its inhabitants, who all trace their descent to the sister of the Emperor Fīrūz Shāh, spread over the whole of Bengal.

"This is the legend. I have not met with Safiuddīn's name in any Indian history, or in the numerous biographies of Muhammadan saints. The story, however, contains one historical personage, the saint Bū Alī Qalandar of Pānīpat-Karnāl, to whom, as related above, Safi applied for blessing. This apparently most unimportant item furnishes the clue to the whole legend. His full name is Shaikh Sharafuddīn Bū Alī Qalandar. He was a follower of the first Indian saint, Muīn-ud-dīn-i Chishtī, whose tomb is at Ajmīr, and wrote several religious works, from among which a small Masnawī, without title, has been printed. Bū Alī Qalandar lived at Pānīpat, and died there, at an advanced age, on the 13th Ramazān 724, or in the middle of September, 1324 A. D. His shrine still exists in Pānīpat. The date of the death of the saint enables us to ascertain which of the three Emperors of Dihlī that bore the name of Fīrūz Shāh, corresponds to the Fīrūz Shāh of the Panduah legend. Fīrūz Shāh I died in A. D. 1236; Fīrūz Shāh II in 1296; and Fīrūz Shāh III reigned from 1351 to 1388; and thus we see that the Panduah legend means Fīrūz Shāh II, or, according to his full name, Jalāluddīn i-Khiljī Fīrūz Shāh, whose contemporary was Bū Alī Qalandar.

"We may thus safely refer the foundation of the Muhammadan settlement at Panduah to the very end of the 13th century, or not quite 100 years after the conquest of Nadiā and the overthrow of the Lakhmaniyah rulers of Bengal by Bakhtyār i-Khiljī, a date with which not only the style of architecture of the Pathān mosque of Panduah, but also the inscriptions on Zafar's tomb in Tribenī (A. H. 713 or A. D. 1313) fully agree.*"

In the 13th century, therefore, Panduā was a place of some importance, and, as the remains show, its importance increased during the next two centuries. The question naturally arises how Panduā, an inland town, far from any river, and at some distance from Tribenī or Sātgāon, could have attained so

* Proc. A. S. B. 1870, pp. 123-25.

much importance. The explanation probably lies in the hydrography of the tract, which has largely changed in the last few centuries. The main stream of the Dāmodar flowed for some time in the long tortuous channel now called *Kānā* or the dead; but it seems clear that at an earlier date it had a straighter course. The line of this straight course is indicated by the depressions in this thāna, including the Kasai below Panduā. We may infer that Panduā was originally connected with the Hooghly by the Dāmodar, which debouched somewhere near Nayāsarāi and consequently it had good water communication. Later on, the Pādishāhi road to Sātgāon appears to have passed through Panduā, thus facilitating access by land, so that in the 15th and 16th centuries Panduā was able to maintain its position, though the Dāmodar shifted its course.

Panduā was noted in the 18th century for its paper, which was prized for its thinness and durability. In the 19th century the Magistrate of Hooghly was frequently asked by other Magistrates for supplies of the Panduā paper; while the Hooghly Magistrate asked the Customs Collector of Hooghly for free passes to import the paper for his own use. In 1838, he reported that this paper was not only the best but also the cheapest. The trade has now died out owing to the introduction of machine-made paper manufactured in Bengal or imported from Europe. In the early British rule Panduā was notorious for its dacoities; and it took a long time, and required the employment of a special officer, to stamp them out from the locality.

Phurphurā.—A village in thāna Chanditalā of the Serampore subdivision. It is situated not far from the left bank of the Saraswatī river, above 6 miles west of Serampore town. A considerable centre of Musalmāns, it is inhabited by many respectable *āimādārs* or rent-free tenure-holders. They are known as Ashrāf, and are said to be descendants of Muhammadan officers and soldiers, who receiving free grants of lands settled here in the pre-Mughal days. According to tradition, a Bāgdi king ruled in Phurphurā and was defeated in a battle with Hazrat Shāh Kabīr Halibi and Hazrat Karam-ud-dīn, both of whom were killed.

In the neighbourhood of this place, at Molnah (or Mullā) Simlā, are an old low mosque and the tomb of Hazrat Muhammad Kabīr Sāhib, generally called Shāh Anwar Kuli of Aleppo. Nothing is known about this saint. Two stones near the tomb are pointed out as those on which the saint used to kneel at the time of shaving; and it is said that the marks made by his knees are still visible. The saint is credited with having been fond of looking-glasses; hence pilgrims often place looking-glasses on the

tomb as offerings. After buying them, the pilgrims must not look in them on their way to the tomb, or misfortunes will happen, as was the case with one man who, it is said, fell down dead, because he looked at his face in the glass he had bought for the saint. This curious custom seems to indicate some connection with the birth-place of Shāh Anwar, as Aleppo was formerly famous for its glassware. The tomb is venerated both by Hindus and Muhammadans.

An inscription on black basalt in the Tughrā character is fixed over the entrance to the *Dargāh*. It records the erection of a mosque by the great Khān Ulugh Mukhlis Khān in the year 777H. (1375 A. D.),* and is therefore assumed to belong to the mosque near by, which is without any inscription. It is said that the mosque was built, after Shāh Anwar's death, by an ambassador, who also endowed it with lands; but, curiously enough, the inscription makes no mention of the saint Shāh Anwar. Judging from the architectural details, the mosque appears to belong to a group of mosques which were built only within a limited period, viz., 865 to 925 H. (1460-1519 A.D.). According to tradition, the mosque was built in 1001 H. by a merchant. Caught in a storm on the Saraswati river, his boat was about to sink, and he was saved miraculously on praying to the saint Anwar. In gratitude, he had this mosque built close to the saint's tomb.†

Polbā.—A village in the Hooghly subdivision, 8 miles northwest of Hooghly town. It contains a police station, the headquarters of the thāna being transferred to it from Bānsberiā in 1878. It is touched by a fair-weather road from Hooghly town, which has bridges over the Saraswatī on the third mile and the Kutni on the fourth mile.

Pursurā.—A village on the right bank of the Dāmodar, situated on the 34th mile of the Old Benares road. It was a place of some importance in old days, being shown in Rennell's Atlas plate VII (1779), as Poorsara, but is now a small straggling village accessible only after the rains. It contains a police outpost and a District Board bungalow. Since the abandonment of the embankments on the right bank of the Dāmodar, about half a century ago, the village lands have become more or less exposed to the annual floods of the river, and the road is breached more or less almost every year. A District Board ferry plies between Chāmpādāngā and Pursurā in the rains, and this ferry can be traced as far back as 1828.

---

* Blochmann, J. A. S. B., 1870, pp. 291-92.

† M. M. Chakravarti, *Pre-Mughal Mosques*, J.A.S.B., 1910, pp. 27, 28, figs. 3 and 4.

Rājbalhāt.—A considerable village on the left bank of the Dāmodar in thāna Krishnanagar of the Serampore subdivision. In the early British period it was a place of importance, being selected in 1786 for the seat of a Commercial Residency. The Residency was transferred to Haripāl about 1790. "Rajbaulhaut" appears in Rennell's Atlas as a police station and the junction of several roads. After the diversion of trade to the east of the district, the place lost its importance; and it also suffered during the epidemics of Burdwān fever in the seventies. A weekly *hāt* is still held here, at which there is a fair trade in rice, etc.

Sanchitārā.—An estate in the Serampore subdivision with an area of 23,724 acres and a rent-roll of Rs. 59,074, the land revenue demand being Rs. 47,534. The estate originally belonged to the zamīndārs mentioned in the article on Sarsā, but Rāmdhan Banerji of Telinipārā mortgaged it to one Biswambhar Sil, after which Kshetra Nāth Sil sold it for Rs. 1,27,000 to Bābu Bejoy Krishna Mukherji. The present proprietors are his grandsons, Bābu Rās Bihāri Mukherji and Bābu Siva Nārāyan Mukherji. It is called after a village of the same name in the Panduā thāna.

Sarsā.—A large estate in the Serampore subdivision with an area of 25,170 acres, the land revenue demand being Rs. 47,633 and the rent-roll Rs. 50,308. This estate, Sanchitārā and Gangādharpur, originally formed one estate called Gangādharpur, which was purchased by Bābu Baddi Nāth Banerji of Telinipārā from the Burdwān Rāj. In 1850, there was a partition among the descendants of Baddi Nāth, by which the property was split up into the three estates of Sarsā, Sanchitārā, and Gangādharpur. The present proprietors are Bābus Satya Bhupāl Banerji and Satya Kripāl Banerji.

The founder of the family was Bābu Rati Kānta Banerji, who was a *mukhtār* in the Nawāb's Court at Murshidābād in 1150 B.S., and settled at Mānkundu. Having helped the then Rājā of Sheorāphuli in paying his revenue, he received some property at Telinipārā as a gift from him; and this formed the nucleus of an estate which was further increased by his grandson, Bābu Baddi Nāth Banerji, who served in the Commissariat and there made a fortune. The estate is so called after Sarsā, a small village in the Panduā thāna.

Sātgāon.—A small village on the left bank of the Saraswatī in thāna Hooghly of the Hooghly subdivision, about 4 miles north of the town. The Grand Trunk Road passes through the village, the 31st mile-stone lying between it and the river; another road connects it with Hooghly town *viâ* Kāzidāngā, the

site of Bandel station, and just south of the place is the Trisbīghā station of the East Indian Railway. At the time of Blochmann's visit in 1870, there were only 11 huts here, but the unevenness of the ground between them and the Saraswatī pointed to its having been the site of an extensive settlement. At one place not far from the road the capital of a large pillar was visible, which the people called *Pādishāhi filpāi.* At present a few huts may be seen here and there among jungle-covered mounds. On the east of the Grand Trunk Road, a considerable area is occupied by some high ground strewn with broken bricks, which is locally called the *Kilā* or fort; and further east are several tanks, one of which, known as Jahāngīr's tank, is fairly large in size. A pathway along the river bank leads north-east to Tribenī at the mouth of the river; 2½ miles off. Sātgāon is the Musalmān form of the Sanskrit word Saptagrām, derived from *sapta*, seven, and *grām*, villages.

The only remains of this famous capital that are now extant are a mosque and a few tombs near it. The portions of the mosque still left are the front or east wall and the back or west wall: even these portions are not intact, and the growth of young *pīpal* trees in the rains threatens further destruction. The entrance in the front wall is arched (semi-circular) in the latest Pathān style; inside, there is a crescent over the entrance. The back wall has three *mihrābs* or niches, of which two are large and the third one (at the north end) small. The walls are built of small bricks and are ornamented inside and outside with arabesque work. Over the entrance is a basalt slab, 4 feet by 3 feet, with an Arabic inscription stating the that Jāma Masjid was built in the reign of Abul Muzaffas Nusrah Shāh by Sayyid Jamāl Dīn Husain, son of Sayyid Fakhruddīn of Amul in Ramazān 936 H. (May 1529 A.D.): Amul is a town on the Caspian Sea. According to local tradition, Fakhr-ud-dīn is said to have come to Bengal with Shāh Safi of Panduā and Zafar Khān of Tribenī, a story *primâ facie* inconsistent with the inscribed date of the mosque. In 1908 the Public Works Department repaired the mosque, patching up the front wall, removing the fallen rubbish, and clearing the surrounding jungle. The building is, however, too ruinous to render restoration feasible.

Near the south-east angle of the mosque is an enclosure with three tombs, where Sayyid Fakhr-ud-dīn, his wife and his eunuch are said to be buried. The largest tomb is ornamented with arabesque work, and has an Arabic inscription (now illegible) at the north end. This tomb is in good preservation. The other two tombs, which lie east of the first, are smaller and not in such a

good state of preservation as Fakhr-ud-dīn's. Besides the tombs, there are three inscribed slabs of basalt in the enclosure. One speaks of the erection of the adjoining mosque by Fakhr-ud-dīn; it is partly in Arabic and partly in Persian, and was evidently taken from that mosque. Another (in Arabic) was fixed into the northern wall of the tomb enclosure, and is now kept near the tombs owing to the crumbling of the wall. It records the building of a mosque by Tarbiyat Khān in the reign of Mahmūd Shāh in 861 H. (1457 A.D.). A third, also in Arabic, records the building of another mosque by Ulugh Majlis Nur, Commander and Vizīer during the reign of Fath Shāh, and is dated 892 H. (1487 A. D.). Presumbly, the two mosques referred to in the last two inscriptions were in Sātgāon, and when they fell, the inscriptions were removed by some pious person to this *dargāh.**

Great antiquity is commonly ascribed to Sātgāon, but this seems hardly justified by the known facts. The place has not been traced in any pre-Musalmān Sanskrit works or inscriptions; and it is not mentioned in any of the oldest Musalmān works or inscriptions of Bengal. The earliest mention of it, so far as is known, is found on a silver coin of the Emperor Muhammad bin Tughlak, dated 729H. (1329 A.D.). Before his time, the seat of the Government of South West Bengal was at Tribenī, where several inscriptions have been discovered dating from 1298 A.D. The reasons for the transfer of the headquarters to Sātgāon are not known, but possibly Tribenī was found too Hinduistic for a Musalmān capital; and Muhammad Tughlak was fond of changes. From this time onwards Sātgāon flourished, becoming the port of West Bengal and containing a mint and custom-house; there are numerous coins in existence with the mint-name Sātgāon, a sign that its trade was brisk. On the decay of Sonārgāon in East Bengal, its sea-borne trade was developed, attaining its zenith in the first half of the 16th century; when the Portuguese began to visit West Bengal (from 1535 onwards), they found Sātgāon a great and populous city stored with merchandise. The trading classes had settled there in large numbers, some of them being numerous enough to form distinct endogamous sections with the name Saptagrāmīya, *e.g.*, among the Kāusāris (brass-dealers) and Subarnabaniks (goldsmiths). By the time of Bipra Dās (1495 A.D.) Saptagrām had become so celebrated, that it was described in his poem as the home of seven saints; an account of the place and its trade

---

* Blochmann, J. A. S. B., April 1870, pp. 280-81, 292-94, 297-98; Crawford, *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. III, pp. 19-21.

is also given in the poem *Chandī* of Mukundarām Kavikankan (*circa* 1600). From descriptions of Saptagrām given in the *Chandī* of Mādhabācharya (1579 A.D.) and the *Shashthī-mangal* of Krishnarām (1687 A.D.), the town appears to have extended as far east as the bank of the Ganges, and probably included Tribenī. Its importance in those days is also clear from the fact that it appears in all the old maps, such as those of Gastaldi (1561), De Barros (*circa* 1570) and Blaev (1640). Ramusio, moreover, referred to "Asedegam" as "a good port, with a wide entrance where there is a good and wealthy city containing many merchants and about 10,000 hearths."

The decline of the city began with changes in the river courses. The Dāmodar began to shift westwards; the river Saraswatī also began to silt up; and the upper reaches of the Bhāgīrathī became difficult of navigation by the larger ships that began to visit Bengal. Hence, we find De Barros writing in the *Da Asia* that 'Satgaon is a great and noble city, though less frequented than Chittagong on account of the port not being so convenient for the entrance and departure of ships.' Cesare dei Federici also remarked (1575 A. D.) that Sātgāon was "a reasonable fair city for a city of the Moors, abounding with all things," —a statement repeated by Ralph Fitch in 1587—and that there "the merchants gather themselves together with their trade;" but he added that the larger ships had to stop at Buttor (Bator in Howrah city), and that only small ships could go up to Sātgāon for loading, as "upwardes the river is very shallowe, and little water." Even in his time, however, the sea-borne trade was still large, for he found that every year 30 to 35 ships, both large and small, were loaded in this port "with rice, cloth of Bombast of diverse sortes, Lacca, great abundance of sugar, mirabolans dried and preserved, long pepper, oyle of zerzeline, and many other sorts of marchandise."*

The importance of Sātgāon as the port and headquarters of Western Bengal was further recognized by extending its name to the *Sarkār*. In the *Ain-i-Akbari* this *Sarkār* consisted of 53 *mahāls* with a revenue of 16,724,724 *dāms* (Rs. 4,18,118). *Mahāl* Sātgāon itself comprised the city (Arsha) and a portion of its suburbs lying on the west bank of the river (Tāwāli). The greater part of the suburbs, which had been cut off from the remainder by the river channel shifting and now lay on the east bank, were formed into a separate *mahāl* called Haveli-shahr (now corrupted

* Cf. also *The Voyage to the East Indies*, John Huyghen van Linschoton, 1588, transl., pp. 94-7, chap. 16.

into Hālisahar of the 24-Parganas). Taking all three together, the city and its suburbs were assessed to a total revenue of 737,220 *dāms* (Rs. 18,430-8). In addition to this, custom duties and other taxes were levied, the port dues (*bandarbān*) and custom duties levied on booths (*mandari*) being roughly totalled at 1,200,000 *dāms* (Rs. 30,000).

Sātgāon was connected with the capital by a Pādshāhī road, which on the conquest of Orissa was extended to Mandāran, and is mentioned several times in the early annals of Akbar. Dāūd Khān in his first war against Akbar fled from Tānda to Sātgāon, and thence to Orissa. Muhammad Kulī Khān pursued him to Sātgāon, from which he invaded Jessore. Next Todar Mal followed the same route when marching to Mandāran. When Munim Khān died, Dāūd came by this road from Orissa and retook Tānda. Khān Jahān, after Dāūd's defeat and death at Agmahal, moved to Tānda and thence to Sātgāon, where he defeated the remnant of the Afghān army and drove them back to Orissa. It was here, too, that Dāūd's mother came to him as a suppliant. Sātgāon also appears in the account of the great military revolt, being taken by and retaken from the rebels.

About 1570, the Portuguese removed their factories to Hooghly, and the latter town rapidly superseded Sātgāon as a trading centre, so much so, that by the time Ralph Fitch visited this district (1587), and the *Ain* was compiled (*circa* 1590-92), Hooghly had come to be recognized as the chief port of South-West Bengal. Sātgāon, being more and more deserted by merchants, lost its sea-borne trade, but its inland trade lingered on for several years longer, as we find the English factors at Patna writing in 1620 about "quilts of Sutgonge," plain or wrought with yellow silk, being available for purchase in Patna.*

When Hooghly was captured by the forces of the Bengal Nawāb in 1632, all the public offices, including the custom-house, were removed to that place—the mint at Sātgāon had already ceased to work towards the end of Akbar's reign. After this, the town rapidly declined and soon fell into ruin; but its fame still survived in several later accounts, written in ignorance of the actual facts, *e.g.*, De Laet (1631), Peter Heyleyn (1652), Admiral Warwick (1667) and Thevenot (1668). This error may perhaps be explained by the fact that Sātgāon was sometimes confused with Hooghly, *e.g.*, Marshall wrote about 1676 that "great part of the Towne (Hooghly) was formerly called Satagam."† According to the Revd. J. Long "the old

* *English Factories in India, 1618-21*, Foster, pp. 195, 206.

† *Notes and observations*, p. 6, l.c. Bowrey, p. 167, note 3.

Dutch residents at Hooghly had their country seats at Satgan, and were in the habit of walking from Chinsura in the middle of the day to it and returning after dinner . . . The people of Satgan were famed for wit, and often contended for the palm of wit with the inhabitants of Mahmud Shah in the neighbourhood.'

Finally, with the ruin of the city, its name disappeared from the revenue accounts of Murshid Kulī Khān, the name Arsha alone being used for the *pargana* and for a small zamīndāri belonging to Raghudev, which after 1741 was annexed to the Burdwān zamīndāri. Sātgāon is not shown in any maps subsequent to 1650 A. D., but in the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, again came into prominence owing to its paper manufacture. Considerable quantities of paper were exported to Hooghly town and to other districts of Bengal; but the industry declined owing to the introduction of paper manufacture in jails, and was killed by the import of the cheaper machine-made article.

Serampore (*Srīrāmpur*, Srīrām's town).—Headquarters of the subdivision of the same name situated in 22° 45′ N. and 88° 21′ E. It lies on the right bank of the Hooghly river, midway between the towns of Hooghly and Howrah (12 miles from each). The branch Grand Trunk Road connects it with Howrah, and the Hooghly river with that town and Calcutta. Heavy goods are conveyed to and from the metropolis in big boats or barges towed by steam launches, and passengers in *pānsis* (small barges) or the Kālnā steamers of the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company. The town is also well served by rail. The East Indian Railway touches it and its suburbs at four stations, Konnagar, Rishrā, Serampore and Sheorāphuli; Serampore is a station at which all trains stop except the Bombay and Punjab mails. It can also be reached by the Eastern Bengal State Railway (on the other side of the Hooghly), on which there are three stations (Khardah, Titāgarh and Barrackpore) at distances of half a mile to a mile and half from the river. There are public ferries at six places, viz., (1) from Chātrā to Barrackpore, (2) Serampore to Barrackpore, (3) Ballabhpur to Titāgarh, (4) Māhesh to Titāgarh, (5) Rishra to Khardah, and (6) Konnagar to Pānihāti.

The municipality, which was constituted in 1865, is divided into four wards, viz., proceeding from north to south, (I) Chātrā, (II) Serampore, (III) Māhesh and Rishrā, and (IV) Konnagar. It has nearly doubled its population within 30 years, the numbers being 24,440 in 1872, 44,451 in 1901 and 49,594 in 1911. This increase is largely due to the influx of immigrants, chiefly males.

The large number of mills and other industrial concerns, the scarcity of local labour, and facilities of communication have attracted immigrants from up-country on a considerable scale, with the result that parts of the town have become overcrowded. Malarial fever is endemic, and cholera breaks out at times. A supply of good drinking water for the *bastis* and the area furthest away from the river, and an improved system of drainage are at present the crying needs of the town. A water-works scheme has been sanctioned and some progress has been made with a drainage scheme. The tracts worst drained are Ward No. III and those parts lying west of the Grand Trunk Road, where the drainage is obstructed by the East Indian Railway line.

Chātra

Chātrā and Nabagrām in the northernmost ward are more or less suburbs of Serampore proper. This ward lies, for the most part, between a road running along or near the river bank and the branch Grand Trunk Road, which meets the Grand Trunk Road at Ghireti. Chātrā is a fairly old village, being shown as "Chatterah" in Rennell's Atlas, plate XIX (1781). It is inhabited by many Bārendra Brāhmans, and has a number of small shops on the river road.

Serampore.

South-east of Chātrā, from which it is separated by a large *khāl* or creek, is Serampore, the most important ward of the municipality. It is divisible into three sections, the northern, central and southern. The northern section is largely inhabited by Bārendra Brāhmans and contains the residences of the Bārendra Gosāin family. It is separated from the central section by another *khāl*, which falls into the river and is crossed by a small bridge.

The central section, which is the longest, the most thickly populated and the most important, contains the public offices. The old house of the Danish Governor with its large compound is utilized for the subdivisional criminal courts and revenue offices. The building is two-storeyed, the upper storey serving as an inspection bungalow. Opposite the courts is the residence of the Subdivisional Officer, a two-storeyed house of modern date, and to the left of this are the Civil Courts. Serveral other buildings are clustered together in the neighbourhood of the Criminal Courts, viz, the old Danish Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the sub-registry office and the post office. A little distance off is the sub-jail (formerly the Danish court-house and jail) with the date 1805 over the entrance gate. Near the railway station is the Mission cemetery containing the tombs of Carey, Marshman and Ward; and near the courts is the Danish cemetery. The Strand Road runs along the river bank for about a mile. Most

of the big houses in the town lie along this road, part of which is well-shaded with trees.

Serampore is one of the most interesting towns in Bengal, because its history is that of the attempt of the Danes to found a colonial empire, and later of English missionaries to establish the Christian religion in Bengal. The history of the Danes has already been given in Chapter III, and it will be sufficient to state here that when Serampore (Frederkisnagore) was ceded to the English by the treaty of 1845, the town had the following public buildings, (1) the Government House, (2) the Secretary's house and offices, (3) the court-house with the jail annexed, (4) the Church, (5) the bazar with godowns and (6) two small brick-built guard-houses on the river bank. The town was 60 *bīghās* in area; and attached to it were the *mahāls* of Serampore, Akna and Piārāpur, for which the Danes paid to the zamīndār of Sheorāphuli an annual rent of *sicca* Rs. 1,601.* This estate is now known as the Piārāpur estate of the Serampore *Khās Mahāls.*

As regards the Serampore missionaries, Carey, Marshman, Ward and their fellow-workers and successors, it will perhaps be sufficient to refer the reader to the account given in Chapter V and to quote the words of Mr. J. C. Marshman—"A feeling of solemnity pervades the mind in contemplating the spot where the first Missionary press was established; the first version of the Scriptures in the languages of this Presidency, and the first tract in the language of Bengal, was printed, and the first vernacular school opened; the first converted Hindu baptized, and the first steam engine ever seen in India set up, in order to manufacture paper for the printing of the sacred Scriptures . . Their remains now repose in the same hallowed ground in the Mission cemetery at Serampore, together with those of their highly gifted and affectionate associate, Mr. Mack."†

The following is a brief account of the principal buildings, beginning with the three Christian churches. The oldest is the Roman Catholic Church, which was built in 1776 with the help of contributions given by the rich Baretto family of Calcutta. It replaced a chapel (built in 1764), which was found too small for the congregation and was therefore pulled down. The Protestant church, which has a lofty steeple surmounted by a globe and cross, was formerly the Danish Church dedicated to St. Olaf. The gateway bears the monogram of Frederick VI of Denmark; and the

---

* Article II of the Treaty, Toynbee's *Sketch*, p. 163.

† Notes on the Right Bank of the Hooghly, *Calcutta Review*, Vol. IV, pp. 500, 502.

altar or communion table is at the west end. It was built by public subscriptions obtained through the exertions of Colonel Bie, and was completed in 1805 at an expense of Rs. 18,500. Of this sum, Rs. 1,000 was contributed by the Marquis of Wellesley, who is said to have remarked at the time that nothing was wanting to the Barrackpore Park but the distant view of a steeple. Mr. Marshman writing in 1845 stated:—"No service has ever been performed in it by a Danish clergyman in consequence of the capture of the town by the English soon after its erection, and the small body of Danes resident in it subsequently to the restoration of the town. The service has been gratuitously conducted by the Serampore Missionaries, and their colleague Mr. Mack, during the long period of thirty-seven years. The only property belonging to the Church consists of a pair of large silver candlesticks presented in 1803 by Mrs. Schow."* The third church is the Mission Chapel, purchased by Dr. Carey and his colleagues in 1800, in which they and Mr. Mack preached for 45 years.

One of the most interesting memorials of these Missionaries is the College, which they founded in 1818. The building has been described as follows by Mr. J. C. Marshman, C.S.I., a son of Dr. Marshman:—"The centre building intended for the public rooms was 130 feet in length and 120 in depth. The hall on the ground floor, supported on arches, and terminated at the south by a bow, was 95 feet in length, 66 in breadth, and 20 in height. It was originally intended for the library, but is now occupied by the classes. The hall above, of the same dimensions and 26 feet in height, was supported by two rows of Ionic columns; it was intended for the annual examinations. Of the twelve side rooms above and below, eight were of spacious dimensions, 27 feet by 35. The portico, which fronted the river, was composed of four columns, more than 4 feet in diameter at the base. The staircase room was 90 feet in length, 27 in width and 47 in height, with two staircases of cast-iron, of large size and elegant form, prepared at Birmingham. The spacious grounds were surrounded with an iron railing, and the front entrance was adorned with a noble gate likewise cast at Birmingham." The College contains the library and several relics of the Serampore missionaries, such as the pulpit from which they preached, their chairs, Carey's crutches, translations from the Bible and the royal charter of the College granted by the King of Denmark in 1827. One picture in this

* Notes on the Right Bank of the Hooghly, *Calcutta Review*, Vol. IV, p. 504.

building was long believed to be a portrait of Madame Grand (later Princess Talleyrand) by Zoffany, but it is really a picture of Princess Augusta, sister of Frederick V of Denmark. Adjoining the college is the house in which Dr. Carey lived for many years and died.

Not far off, in the premises of the Howrah waterworks, are two buildings known as "Aldeen House" and the Pagoda. The former, which is now used as a residence by the engineers attached to the waterworks, was once the property and favourite retreat of the Revd. David Brown, as related in Chapter V; it has been suggested that the house was built by some Muhammadans during the period of Mughal rule and that it was used for the purposes of religion (*Dīn*). The latter was formerly a temple of Rādhāballabh, which was purchased by Mr. Brown after it had been abandoned and the image removed owing to the encroachment of the river. "In this cool old Pagoda Henry Martyn, on one of his earliest visits to "Aldeen" after his arrival as a chaplain in 1806, found an appropriate residence. Under the vaulted roof of the shrine a place of prayer and praise was fitted up with an organ, so that, as he wrote, 'the place where once devils were worshipped has now become a Christian oratory.' . . As years went by, the temple thus consecrated as a Christian oratory became degraded in other hands. The brand "Pagoda Distillery" for a time came to be known as marking the rum manufactured there. The visits of so many Christian pilgrims to the spot, and above all the desire expressed by Lord Lawrence when Governor-General to visit it, led the wealthy Hindu family who own the Pagoda to leave it at last as a simple ruin."* It has lately been restored by Government and a memorial tablet placed on it.

Near the railway station is the Mission Cemetery containing the graves of Carey and his family, the vault of the Marshmans and the graves of Ward and Mack, 'the beloved associate.' "No burying ground in India is consecrated with four such tombs." The Danish cemetery contains tombs dating back to 1781, among which may be mentioned those of Colonel Krefting, the Danish Chief and Director, who died in 1828 after 44 years' service in India, of Hohlenbergh, another Danish Governor (1833), and of General Mainwaring, author of a dictionary of the Lepcha language, who died at Serampore in 1893.

Ballabhpur. Near the Howrah waterworks the river makes a bend towards the south-west, and brings Ballabhpur into view. This quarter of

* G. Smith, C.I.E., LL.D., Life of William Carey.

Serampore is semi-urban in character and is known chiefly for its temple of Rādhāballabh and Rath-Jātrā. The following legend is told about the origin of the idol and temple. "About eight generations ago, Rudru Pandit, who was related to a family of distinction at Chātrā, a mile to the west of Serampore, forsook the family mansion and retired to Ballabhpur, which was then a forest, where he began a series of religious austerities. The gods are never indifferent to such acts of devotedness, and Rādhāballabh himself is said to have appeared to him in the form of a religious mendicant, and given him instructions to proceed to Gaur, the capital of Bengal, and obtain a slab or stone which adorned the doorway of the Viceroy's private room, and construct an image out of it. He proceeded to that city and found that the Prime Minister and favourite of the Viceroy was a devoted Hindu. To him he announced the revelation he had received, and was assured that no effort should be spared to obey the commands of the God.

"Soon after, the stone began to emit drops of water and, by a singular coincidence, the Viceroy himself happened to pass by at the time. The minister pointed out the circumstance, and asserted that the drops thus distilled were the tears of the stone, and that no time should be lost in delivering the palace from so inauspicious an omen, by the removal of this object. Permission was immediately given to this effect, and Rudru was blessed with the gratification of his wishes. But he was greatly perplexed about the means of removing this treasure, when the God again appeared, and directed him to return forthwith to Ballabhpur, and there await in patience the arrival of the stone. Soon after he had reached his village, it was miraculously conveyed to the river side, and floated down the stream of its own accord to the landing stairs at Ballabhpur, where the devotee was in the habit of bathing.

"Rudru set to work immediately on the stone, and by the aid of the sculptor obtained an image, which is celebrated for its beauty. The mysterious origin of the image soon attracted worshippers, and the proprietor was enabled, from their gifts, to construct the temple. In process of time, the encroachments of the river brought the temple within 300 feet of the edge of the water, and it became necessary to seek some other abode for the God, because no Brāhman is allowed to receive a professional gift or meal within that distance of the sacred stream. The forsaken temple was subsequently purchased by the Reverend David Brown, and the image was removed to another spot, a quarter of a mile inland, where a temple was built at the expense of the wealthy family of the Malliks of Calcutta.

"The splendour of Rādhāballabh's establishment is, however, of more recent origin than the celebrity of the image. Rājā Nubukissen of Calcutta, the Munshi of Clive, and the first native who rose to wealth and distinction after the birth of the British empire in India, took a great fancy to this god. When he was called to perform the funeral obsequies of his mother, he employed the great influence he enjoyed in the country, to convey to his own residence in the metropolis the three images to which Agradwip, Chardah and Ballabhpur owe their distinction. They were carried down to the river on a stage, on the shoulders of Brāhmans - for it would be an act of sacrilege for any but the twice born to touch an image inhabited by the spirit of the Gods—and were conveyed from the ghāt in Calcutta to the Rājā's residence on the same sacerdotal shoulders. Soon after, he dismissed two of the images, but retained that of Rādhāballabh for a twelvemonth, and exhibited a strong indisposition to part with it. He offered large sums of money to the priests—according to popular report, to the extent of Rs. 10,000 or Rs. 12,000—for permission to keep it; but they refused to part with the heirloom of their family. They importuned him for its restoration, time after time, but without success. An appeal to the courts of law would at once have secured its return, but such a proceeding would have reflected dishonour on them throughout the country. At length, they threatened the Rājā and his family with a more fearful calamity than a law suit in the Supreme Court,--with the curse of the Brāhmans. These menaces are said to have reached the Rājā's wife, who besought him to send away an image which was likely to prove so inauspicious to the family, and he was persuaded to relinquish it. At the same time, he gave the most substantial proofs of his generosity to its proprietors by endowing them with the village of Ballabhpur, which is supposed to yield them an annual income of about Rs. 800 a year. The patronage of so distinguished a character as Rājā Nubukissen tended greatly to increase the popularity of the shrine, and it is now one of the most wealthy in this part of the country."*

Formerly the image of Jagannāth, which is enshrined at Māhesh, a mile south, used to be brought to "visit" that of Rādhāballabh at Ballabhpur during the car festival; but owing to disputes between the priests of the two temples, another image of Jagannāth was set up at Ballabhpur.

In this ward the Bārendra Brāhmans, with the Gosāins at their head, and the Tāntis or weaver caste, are prominent. The

* *Calcutta Review*, Vol. IV, pp. 492-4.

latter are a quiet hardworking class, whose fine cloths, known as Farāsdāngā cloths, still hold their own in the markets of Calcutta and Howrah; they use an improved loom known as the Serampore loom. A Government institution for the training of weavers has recently been established here. During the period of British rule two families of this locality have come to the front, viz., the Deys and the Gosāins. The Deys belong to the Teli caste, originally a caste of oilmen, but now mostly of traders. They obtained their wealth chiefly by establishing a private sub-monopoly of salt in the days when the general monopoly was held by the East India Company, and then acquired landed property by taking up mortgages and by purchase. Their dispute with the Sheorāphuli Rāj about the bathing of Jagannāth at Māhesh during the Snān-jātrā has been already described in the account of Baidyabāti in the article on Sheorāphuli.

Gosāin family

The Gosāins or Goswāmis, the leading family in the town, trace back their descent to Dharādhār, son of Chāndar, who was one of the five Brāhmans said to have been brought by the king Adisur from Kanauj. The original seat of the family was at Pātuli, an old place on the right bank of the river Bhāgīrathī above Kātwā in the Burdwān district, which was also the original home of the founders of the Bānsberiā and Sheorāphuli Rāj. Lakshman Chakravartī married into the Gosāin family of Sāntipur in Nadiā, an influential family descended from the great scholar Adwaita, the colleague of Chaitanya. Lakshman's son Rāmgovinda succeeded to the zamīndāri and other properties of his maternal uncle and assumed his title of Gosāin. It is said that one day, his boat having upset, he had to swim ashore to Serampore and, attracted by the place, settled here permanently. Not improbably he was also attracted by the fact that the younger branch of the Pātuli zamīndārs resided at Sheorāphuli. He got grants of lands from the Sheorāphuli Rāj, and the Rājā of Bishnupur appointed him *sebāit* of three idols, Rādhāmohan, Rādhikā and Gopāl, which he had endowed with rent-free lands; these idols are now the family idols of the Gosāins. Rāmgovinda was thus the founder of the Serampore family.

Rāmgovinda's youngest son, Harinārāyan, became *Dīwān* of Customs under the Danish East India Company. At that time (1773-83) the trade of Serampore was at its zenith, and Harinārāyan amassed a large fortune. His younger son Raghurām was "banian" to the great firm of Mr. John Palmer, styled "the Prince of Merchants." The firm failed in 1832, involving many persons in ruin, but it is said that Palmer gave a timely hint to Raghurām, who was thus able to realize his securities.

Raghurām also traded largely on his own account, both before and after the failure of Palmer and Co., and was a large shareholder in the Union Bank, an Indian bank started by the late Dwārkanāth Tagore. This bank also failed, but before it suspended payment Raghurām had sold his shares. He thus saved himself from the misfortune which befell Dwārkanāth Tagore, Chhātu and Lālā Bābus, and other prominent persons of Calcutta. Raghurām purchased extensive zamīndāris and acquired such wealth, that when the Danish King offered to sell Serampore to the English in 1845, he offered to buy it for twelve lakhs of rupees; but this was not allowed by the English Government. He died a millionaire, and was the real architect of the present fortunes of the Gosāin family.

Raghurām's two surviving sons, Gangā Prasād and Gopī Krishna, inherited the property. Gopī Krishna was a pious and orthodox Hindu, who travelled much on pilgrimage, and endowed the family gods with lands yielding a net income of Rs. 14,000. This amount is still spent on the worship of the gods and on charitable purposes. Gangā Prasād had one son, Hem Chandra, who died in 1907, leaving four daughters, who inherited his large property under a will. Gopī Krishna had five sons, of whom three are now living, Kisori Lāl, Rājendra Lāl and Rādhikā Lāl. The Hon'ble Rai Kisori Lal Goswami Bahādur is the head of this younger branch. He is a Vakil of the High Court, was Chairman of the Serampore Municipality, and is now (1911) a member of the Executive Council of Bengal. During his time the landed property has been considerably developed, especially the zamīndāri at Kānkināra in the 24-Parganas, by the opening of jute mills.*

Māhesh. South of Ballabhpur along the river bank is Māhesh, and still further south is Rishrā. Māhesh is famous for its temple of Jagannāth, and for the annual festivals of Snān-jātrā (bathing festival), Rath-jātrā (car festival) and Ultā-rath (the return festival), which attract immense crowds to the town: in fact, the Rath-jātrā of Māhesh is the largest festival of its kind in India outside Purī. The following legend is told about this shrine. An ascetic of Māhesh named Dhrubānanda Brahmachāri went on a pilgrimage to Purī, where the god Jagannāth came to him in a dream, bidding him return to Māhesh, where he promised to appear to him. After his return Dhrubānanda found an image of Jagannāth partly hidden in sand on the bank of the Ganges. A few

* Most of the facts above given are taken from a note kindly supplied by the Hon'ble Rai Kisori Lāl Goswami Bāhādur.

days later he found the images of Subhadrā and Baladeb in the same place, and having set them up by the side of the image of Jagannāth, made over the three images to his disciple Kamalākar Piplāi. Some years afterwards a Nawāb of Murshidābād, having been given shelter during a storm by the *sebāits* of the shrine, gave them a piece of revenue-free land in Māhesh and the title of Adhikāri. The Māhesh temple rapidly grew in importance. A wealthy Madak dedicated the first car, and a zamīndār of Sheorāphuli gave the Adhikāris the village of Jagannāthpur, as *debottar* land.

Another legend says that the god Jagannāth stopped and bathed at Māhesh on his way to Purī, where he dined. Hence the place became sacred, and all the Purī ceremonies were introduced. The present temple was built by the Calcutta Malliks, while the car was the gift of the Boses. About 1835 the old car was found to be unsafe on account of decay and the ravages of white-ants, and it was therefore replaced by the present iron car. During the Rath-jātrā festival the safety of the vehicle is first certified by the District Engineer, and a cordon is formed, by means of a rope held up by constables, to prevent the crowd getting too near. The image is next placed on the car, and amid much rejoicing and shouting the car is drawn by hawsers to the God's garden-house in the north of Māhesh. After eight days, on the Ultā-rath day, the car with the image is drawn back to its old place, whence the image is carried to the temple.

Māhesh is an old place mentioned in the poem of Bipra Dās (1495 A. D.) and in the poem on the legend of Satyanārāyan (18th century). The worship of Jagarnāth may be assumed to be several centuries old, and not improbably began when this part of the country was under the Oriyā kings.

Rishrā. Rishrā is a thriving quarter with two large jute mills (Wellington and Hastings), which are connected with the Rishrā station by a siding. The majority of the mill-hands live on the other side of the Trunk Road in a *bastī* situated on *Khās Mahāl* land. They get their drinking water from hydrants supplied with filtered water by the mills, and a large private market supplies them with provisions.

Rishrā appears to be as old as Māhesh, being mentioned in the poem of Bipra Dās (1495A.D.), but first rose to importance during the early days of British rule. On the south bank of the Chāmpā Khāl, a creek that separated this place from Māhesh, stood Rishrā House, where Warren Hastings and his wife used to come and stay. It was surrounded by a brick-wall, the western portion of which was lined with a row of mango trees said to have been planted by Mrs. Hastings. When Hastings retired, he sold

the house and adjoining land (136 *bighas*),* receiving twice as much as he had paid for it. It now forms part of the buildings of the Hastings Mill; and the original deed, bearing the signature of the great Pro Consul, is in the possession of the mill proprietors.

South of Rishrā is the eastern ward, Konnagar. It is rather sparsely inhabited, but has developed of recent years, chiefly owing to the existence of the chemical works of Messrs. Waldie and Co., and the efforts of the late Babu Trailakya Nāth Mittra. The latter was a Vakil of the Calcutta High Court and Chairman of the Serampore Municipality, who improved Konnagar considerably and left a large fortune. Konnagar is mentioned in the poem of Bipra Dās (1495), but first rose to importance with the growth of European trade. In 1845 it was described as a populous and wealthy village, the residence of many natives who had amassed or were amassing wealth in Calcutta. In fact, like Serampore and Rishrā, it formed a suburban retreat for the well-to-do people of the metropolis. Now, however, the place has lost its reputation for healthiness. Konnagar.

Serampore Subdivision.—A subdivision lying in the south-east of the district between 22° 40′ and 22° 55′ N. and 87° 59′ and 88° 22′ E. with an area of 343 square miles. It is bounded by the rivers Hooghly and Dāmodar and intersected by many streams and *khāls* with long swamps lying between the main streams. The country is low and rather flat, but rises gradually towards the Dāmodar river, and the streams drain the country from north and north-west to south and south-east. Though the slope is more pronounced than in the Sadar subdivision, still the streams mostly become silted up after the rains, leaving numerous pools of stagnant water in their beds. The subdivision consequently becomes water-logged, and towards the end of the rains malarious. Thāna Krishnanagar is the worst in this respect, and then thāna Haripāl, or roughly the south-western portion of the subdivision; in Krishnanagar thāna the population decreased from 69,280 in 1872 to 57,694 in 1901. On the other hand, the lands are fertile, especially those enriched by silt deposits from the Hooghly and its branch, the Saraswatī. The chief crops are paddy, potatoes, jute, vegetables and fruits, sugarcane and oilseeds. The manufacture of cotton cloths has survived at Serampore and Haripāl, and the dyeing of silk handkerchiefs at Serampore. Large quantities of bricks and tiles are manufactured along the banks of the Hooghly, and pottery

* *Selections from the Calcutta Gazette*, Vol. I, p. 49. (Auction notice, under date 5th August 1874.)

at Bhadreswar. The jute and cotton mills in Serampore, Bhadreswar and Baidyabāti have already been referred to. The population of the subdivision was 413,178 in 1901, representing 1,205 persons to the square mile.

Sheorāphuli.—See Baidyabāti.

Singur.—A village in the Serampore subdivision and the headquarters of a police station. It is connected with Baidyabāti by a District Board road, but is more easily accessible by the Tārakeswar branch of the East Indian Railway, a station being located here. It has a sub-registry office, a post office, a High English school, and a *tol* teaching *smriti* or law. The head-quarters of the thāna was transferred from Baidyabāti to Singur in 1878. It was notorious in the early days of British rule for dacoities and robberies.

Sītāpur.—A village in thāna Krishnanagar of the Serampore subdivision. It is connected with Antpur by a District Board road, but can be reached more easily by the Chāmpādāngā extension of the Howrah-Amtā Light Railway. It is one of the centres of the Musalmān population in the district, and contains a *madrasa* which is supported by a Government grant. This grant owes its origin to an assignment of Rs. 4-8 a day made in 1772 by Governor Cartier, which was increased to Rs. 5 by Warren Hastings in 1781.* The *Mutawāli* draws at present Rs. 158-13-5 a month, three-fourths of which is appropriated to the *madrasa* and one-fourth to the mosque. He is said to be a lineal descendant of Maulana Makhdum Ismāil Bāgdadi, who came to India in the reign of Akbar, and whose eldest son Makhdum Sāh Abdullah Abdul is said to have settled at Sītāpur on the left bank of the Kānā Dāmodār. His second brother settled at Phurphurā and the youngest brother at Midnapore.

Syāmbazar.—A village in thāna Goghāt on the extreme western border of the Ārāmbāgh subdivision, close to the boundary of the Bānkurā district. It is one mile east of Badanganj outpost and is reached by a loop road beginning from and ending in the Old Nāgpur road. The village contains a mud-walled thatched bungalow of the District Board, and a sub-registry office. From 1877 to 1885 it was the head-quarters of a Municipal Union. It is the centre of the tusser-spinning and tusser-weaving industries, the fabrics being all exported either to the *hāts* of Rāmjibanpur or Rāmkristapur or bought by dealers from Orissa and up-country. Some trade is also carried on in ebony articles.

Tārakeswar.—An important village in thāna Haripāl of the Serampore subdivision, situated in 22° 53′ N. and 88° 2′ E. It

* Toynbee's *Administration of the Hooghly District*, pp. 119-20.

is connected with Baidyabāti by a District Board road 21 miles long, of which 10 miles are metalled; but it can be reached easily from Calcutta by the Tārakeswar branch line of the East Indian Railway starting from the Sheorāphuli station and from up-country by the Bengal Provincial Railway starting from the Magrā station. Tārakeswar is, in fact, the terminus of the two lines. It contains a police outpost, a District Board bungalow, a small dispensary maintained by the Mahant of the temple, and two *tols*, which receive aid from the Mahant and are therefore sometimes called Mahant Mahārāj *tols*.

The chief object of interest is the shrine of the linga of the god Siva called Tārakeswar, which is about 500 yards from the railway station. This shrine consists of two parts, the sanctum and the verandah or porch in front of it. The sanctum is plain inside, with the linga in the middle. Its outside is carved like a Bengali hut and has a duplicate with three spires over it. The porch is four-sided, with three arched cusped openings, and the floor has a marble pavement; it is about 25 feet square and 30 feet high, with a railing over the roof. Facing this porch is a large open hall with a roof supported by pillars and a floor paved with marble. The temple is so much surrounded by houses on all sides that no good view of it can be obtained from outside. The Mahant lives in a house to the east, and to the north of the temple is a fair-sized tank much used by pilgrims. Close by is a large bazar, which is paved with flagstones; and near the bazar is a fine tank.

Pilgrims come to the shrine throughout the year and on all the days of the week, but Monday is the favourite day, as it is considered the day most auspicious to Siva. Several religious festivals are held periodically, the largest crowds assembling on the Siva-rātri and Charak Sankrānti days. The Siva-rātri (the night of Siva) is held on the night of the fourteenth *tithi* of the dark fortnight in the month of Phālgun (February-March). At this time a fair takes place which lasts for three days, and on the night itself 20,000 persons gather at the shrine. Charak Sankrānti, or the last day of Chaitra, takes place at present on 13th April, which is also the last day of the Bengali year; on this occasion men swing from high poles. Throughout the month of Chaitra Sūdras fast during the day-time, taking their meals only after sunset, as in the Ramazān fast of the Muhammadans. On the Charak Sankrānti day they assemble at Tārakeswar, deposit their orange-coloured strips of cloth (*uttariya*) before the god and offer prayers to him, fasting both day and night. Locally, this festival is the most important, some 15,000 to 25,000 persons

visiting the temple during it. The *melā* held in connection with the festival lasts five to six days.

The village is not old nor is the shrine. The place is not shown in Rennell's Atlas (1779-81), but appears in the Survey maps of 1830-45 as Taressure. Regarding its origin, the following curious legend is told. Rājā Vishnu Dās, a Kshatriya by caste, lived at Mohaba Garkalingar in Oudh, early in the eighteenth century. Rather than remain under the rule of the Musalmān Nawābs of Oudh, the Rājā emigrated to Bengal, and took up his abode at the village of Rāmnagar at Balāgarh, near Haripāl, about two miles from where Tārakeswar now stands. With him came 500 followers of his own caste, and 100 Brāhmans from Kanauj. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood suspected them of being robbers, and sent word to the Nawāb of Bengal at Murshidābād that a large gang of marauders, in complete armour and with strange beards and moustaches, had come and settled near Haripāl. The Nawāb having sent for them, the Rājā presented himself, and said that they were harmless folk who only wanted some land whereon to settle. Tradition states that, to prove his innocence, Rājā Vishnu Dās went through the ordeal by fire, holding in his hand a red-hot iron bar, without sustaining injury. The Nawāb was convinced of his honesty and gave him a grant of 500 *bighās* of land (equal to 1,500 *bighās* at the present day) eight miles from Tārakeswar.

Vishnu Dās had a brother, who became a religious mendicant and wandered about the neighbourhood as a devotee. While living in the jungle near Tārakeswar, then known as *Jot* Savaram, he noticed that many cows entered the jungle with udders full of milk, and returned with them empty. Varamal Singh, as the devotee was called, followed them to see who milked them, and saw them discharge milk of their own accord on to a stone which had a deep hollow in it, made by cowherds grinding rice. He tried to dig up the stone, and spent a whole day at the work without reaching its lower side. During the night he dreamed that Tārakeswar (a form of Siva) appeared to him and ordered him not to dig up the stone, but to build over it a temple, of which he should be the *Mahant*. Varamal Singh then went and related his dream to his brother Vishnu Dās, whose help he asked. The two brothers accordingly built the temple of Tārakeswar over the sacred stone, and Varamal Singh became its first *Mahant*. The original temple having fallen into decay, the present building was erected by the Rājā of Burdwān. Chintāmani Dey of Howrah is said to have erected the marble hall in front of the shrine in gratitude for having been

miraculously cured of disease in answer to prayer offered at the shrine.

The management of the temple is in the hands of a *Mahant* or abbot, who enjoys its revenue during his life-time. The landed estates yield an annual income of Rs. 16,000, and the value of the offerings is said to come to a lakh of rupees; while the expenditure is estimated to be Rs. 5,000 a month. The *Mahant* is a celibate of the *Dasnāmi* order of *sannyāsis*, and is selected rrom the *chelās* or disciples by other *Mahānts* of the order.

Tribenī.—A place of pilgrimage forming the northernmost part of Bānsberiā town (v. Bansberia).

Uttarpāra. (*Uttar*, north, and *pārā* quarter).—A small town on the right bank of the Hooghly in the Serampore thāna and subdivision situated in 22° 40′ N. and 88° 21′ E. Population (1911) 7,373. It is reached from Calcutta by boats and steamers and also from two stations on the East Indian Railway, Bally and Uttarpārā. The town extends along the river bank for about half a mile, the main road being the branch Grand Trunk Road from Howrah, which is metalled and fairly wide throughout. Among the public institutions may be mentioned a police outpost, Government dispensary, public library and the Uttarpārā College. All these lie between the Grand Trunk Road and the river, while the municipal office is situated on the opposite side of that road. The municipality was constituted in 1865 and is the smallest in area in the district. The public library is rich in old books on India, consisting in part of the library formed by the *Hurkaru* newspaper in the first half of the 19th century. It is located in a fine building of the Italian style, which has an imposing appearance from the river. Originally formed by the late Babu Jayakrishna Mukherji, it is now managed by trustees, one of whom is his son, Rājā Piyāri Mohan Mukherji. The famous Bengali Christian poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt stopped in this house for a few months before his death in June 1873. Sanskrit law is studied in two *tols*.

The town is fairly neat and clean, and has a large number of *pucca* houses. It owes its progress largely to the late Rājā Jayakrishna Mukherji and his relatives. Among the private buildings, the houses of Rājā Piyāri Mohan and of Babus Rās Bihāri Mukherji and Jyot Kumār Mukherji are worth mentioning; among other residents, may be mentioned Mr. Justice Pramadā Charan Banerji of the Allahābād High Court, a connection of the same Mukherji family.

Jayakrishna Mukherji, who was born in 1808, became at the age of 16 a regimental clerk of the 14th Foot, for which his

father was commissariat contractor. Both father and son took part in the siege of Bharatpur in 1825, and having obtained a considerable sum as their share of prize-money, invested their savings in landed property in the Hooghly district. In 1830, the Collector, Mr. W. H. Belli, appointed Jayakrishna record-keeper, but this post he lost a few years later. At that time the Board's order directing that the Dutch *pattas* of the Chinsura *Khās Mahā's* were to be surrendered and replaced by English leases was being enforced, and many ryots charged Jayakrishna with taking bribes on the issue of the latter. The Commissioner, after holding an enquiry, dismissed Jayakrishna and the Nāzir in 1836. It should be added that Mr. Toynbee, after studying the voluminous correspondence on the subject, has no hesitation in stating his belief that Jayakrishna was the victim of a conspiracy on the part of the Chinsura ryots and that the charges brought against him were not substantiated. Jayakrishna gradually acquired large landed properties, chiefly by buying estates at the auction sales of the Revenue and Civil Courts, where his intimate knowledge of the Collectorate record-room proved invaluable. Popularly he was known as the Jarāsondha of Hooghly district, and there was hardly any large public movement in which he did not take part. He did a great deal for his own town where he founded the College, the library and (practically) the dispensary. In his old age he became blind, and he died in 1888.

His son Piyāri Mohan Mukherji, who was born in 1840, has been a member of the Legislative Council of Bengal (in 1879 and 1906), and a member of the India Legislative Council (in 1884 and 1886). He is Vice-President of the British Indian Association, and has several times been its President; like his father, he has taken an active part in public movements. In February 1887 he was given the title of Rājā and made a C. S. I. in recognition of his own and his father's services.

Babu Rajkrishna Mukherji was associated with his brother Jayakrishna in founding various local institutions, notably the college, the dispensary and the library of Uttarpārā. He left a large landed property to his son Harihar Mukherji, who, however, died at an early age and was succeeded by the present owner, his son, Babu Jyot Kumar Mukherji. The rental of his landed property in Howrah was immensely increased by the Rājāpur drainage scheme, to the cost of which he contributed Rs. 2,65,000.

INDEX.

A

B

C

F

G

H

I

J

K

L

M

N